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Music
AS A HOBBY

How to Have Fun with Music as a Performer and as a Listener

REVISED EDITION

by

FRED B. BARTON
Member: National Press Club, Overseas Press Club, Akron Crime Clinic

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MUSIC AS A HOBBY, REVISED EDITION

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B-Z

To Lillian Baldwin
who manages to convince
thousands of children
(and their parents)
that music is as normal a part
of education as reading and writing,
and lots more fun.

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Preface

You who are taking up music now as a hobby are truly fortunate. For the best in music is available to you through many sources and many forms. And if in your own community you wish to play, to sing, to enjoy music more frequently, you will find the subject no longer freakish or uncommon. For music is one of the great vitamins of life. You can be as matter-of-fact about providing a steady supply of the music vitamin for your soul as your wife is in providing a supply of food vitamins for your table.

May I say that, although I customarily talk to my typical reader as if he were a man, there is nothing in this book—or in any book I have ever written—which is not equally applicable to women. Women are indeed one of my favorite sexes. Wasn't it Mrs. Poyser in *Adam Bede* who said generously, "Of course women are a little foolish, because God almighty made them to match the men!"

Women have sometimes been smarter than men in discovering the joys of music. That is why I ask no pardon in emphasizing here and now that music is also a masculine affair, and that any man is wise if he makes music an important part of his mental and physical and spiritual, yes and his social, life.

FRED B. BARTON

Akron, Ohio
July, 1941

Note for Revised Edition. Reviewers and correspondents were kindly in their comments on this book. Having now an opportunity to revise it and bring it up to date, I have made use of many suggestions, for which grateful thanks have already been spoken. I hope the book in its new dress reaches a new and wider audience.

F.B.B.

Akron 13, Ohio
October, 1949

Music as a Hobby

CHAPTER I

YOU CAN BE MUSICAL

In twenty-four hours this theater, now dark and empty except for two or three of us who can elude locked doors, would be packed with applauding listeners. Twenty-four hours from now the orchestra leader would have exchanged his green zipper jacket for the formal dress befitting public occasions of importance. The musicians would have discarded their sweaters and soft shirts. And the figure, erect and electric even in a soft shirt and an artist's smock, would not be wasting his priceless music by going back time and again to help the orchestra over a difficult bump. It was a hard piece they were tackling. He, Jascha Heifetz, probably the world's greatest violinist, knew it better than did Fabien Sevitzky and his Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. And he was patient and painstaking in helping them build the performance up to perfection.

During the rest period I stepped to the stage and asked Mr. Heifetz some questions. After the rehearsal I quizzed him some more. I am happy to be able to give the lifelong experience of this master musician to the readers of this book in his own direct and simple words.

"Why, yes, anybody can learn to like good music," said Mr. Heifetz cordially.

"Just listen to all the good music you can. That's all it takes.

"It isn't a matter of money any more. You don't need money to hear good music. You don't need to pay $3, or $2, or even $1. You can get seats for the best orchestras for 50 cents. You may have to buy them ahead of time, and may have to get there early—you may have to make a little effort!

But there are lots of opportunities to enjoy good music. Especially in the summer.

"At the Hollywood Bowl for instance you can hear first-class performances for only 25 cents. There are lots of other orchestral performances, WPA orchestras, and the like."

He paused a moment to acknowledge a greeting from a fellow violinist—Heifetz is democratic and free from that artificial something called temperament—and then went on.

"People are taking up music. The depression that started in 1929 helped that. When you have everything you want, you don't feel the need to express yourself. You have no longings, no desires.

"But a good many people found there was not too much permanence in physical possessions. And when hard times came they began to feel the need for self-expression, and for learning to enjoy good music.

"The WPA made a grant to finance needy artists and composers and writers. When these composers quit worrying about where their next meal was coming from, some of them began to do better work. For the last five years your best sellers in literature have been books written in the U.S.A., not books brought over from Europe, as formerly. And we are beginning to get some good U. S. music."

Coming back to the subject of the individual, the average everyday citizen like you who read this book, and your friends, and all the rest of us, I asked Mr. Heifetz whether he doesn't think that anybody who enjoys music can learn to play. Play *some* instrument, *any* instrument he may fancy!

"Certainly, anybody can learn to play—but you've got to want it, and be willing to do something about it," the great artist answered with emphasis.

"If I wanted something real bad I'd do something about it. I was a student. I have lived on 5-cent meals. I used to buy bread because it didn't cost anything and was filling.

"But plenty of people aren't willing to make any effort. They want everything automatic. They want a radio to give them music. Then they want push-buttons so they won't have to twirl the dial. Then you've got to fix it so they can sit

twenty feet away and they can still push a button. And then they want to go upstairs and still push buttons. Soon these lazy people will want their food chopped up and brought to them on a tray! That's what is wrong with our country."

He went on: "A few years ago some of my friends asked me, 'Why can't we set up a music festival in *this* country, as they do in Europe?'

"I said, 'Your roads are too good. Your hotels are too good. When you go to Bayreuth, over in Europe, you have a tremendously inconvenient railroad trip. *You have to make an effort.* If you go it's because you have a sincere desire, and you come away with something long to remember. Over here it would be so easy to get to any place that people wouldn't go. If they did go, they wouldn't stay but a night or two, and then move on.'"

Well, we Americans *are* lazy, we *are* superficial, we *are* spoiled by having the good things of life made too easily available to us, without thought or effort on our part. Perhaps world conditions are making us more thoughtful, more appreciative of the simple things that make life beautiful. Perhaps we are beginning to realize that each of us has an inherent right to love and know and enjoy good music, and that that love of music can be satisfied somehow, old and poor and friendless though some of us may some day be. *We are beginning to realize that, once we grow to appreciate music, we have something that war or pestilence or depression can never fully take away from us.*

Few of us will ever become experts like Heifetz. I am not suggesting that. As a matter of fact, Heifetz rather prides himself on maintaining the amateur view himself.

"I'm an amateur as well as a professional," he told me. "When I play with a trio, or a quartet, or a quintet, we don't get paid. We may be good or not so good. The fees go to a fund for needy artists." He had assisted in such benefits four or five times.

I asked him how long he has been playing. He thought a minute, then said, "In a few weeks I will have been playing the violin for thirty-three years. My father was my first

teacher. Do you have to have the love of music born in you? Well, it helps."

Asked whether, with all his skill, he still finds it necessary to practice every day, he nodded simply, "Every day."

How long, I queried: just minutes, or hours?

"Hours," he replied. "Minutes would not be enough."

His fiddle, wrapped in a cloth of silk, lay regally in a stout case. I asked the question many amateurs might have asked: "Have you ever put a value on your violin?"

He was not offended. "Yes, I had to value them for insurance purposes," he replied steadily. "Both of them are insured for twenty-one thousand pounds sterling."

That shut me up for a while.

Ask the average businessman, or his wife for that matter, why he doesn't get more enjoyment out of music, and you encounter a string of alibis and excuses.

Some will say, "But I never learned to play when I was young!" As if life ended when people ceased to stand over you, meting out a daily task and pasting a gold star on your report card when you registered a satisfactory performance! Why, most of the important things of life don't begin to happen until you get out from under your teacher's wing. Marriage—business opportunities and responsibilities—adventure and hardship—promotions—these things come for the most part to mature men and women. Not to children.

And are you today not smarter than you were as a child? If you are not, don't let your employer know!

I think you'll agree that your capacity to learn new things is still there, if you ever had such in the first place. Indeed, you may take up a new study, such as music, with an eagerness that would surprise those who knew your haphazard work in school. For here at last is an opportunity to make good with yourself. Here is an opportunity to atone for certain slovenliness and lack of thoroughness in your work in high school and college. And because you breathe a purpose into your music, you will make rapid progress with it, and

will generate that satisfaction and that willingness to live with yourself that every thinking person needs.

"But my work keeps me busy. I'm sure I couldn't find time to keep up any consistent study of music, let alone any practicing," you may argue.

Arnold Bennett wrote a small book you should have in your library, because it's so amazingly good. The book is called *How to Live on Twenty-four Hours a Day*. Check into his advice and see if you can't find ways of doing your present work faster and more easily. You will have time to take on new and additional activities.

If music at bedtime will relax your tense nerves and put you into a dreamless and untroubled sleep, then you'll need fewer hours of rest and still will enjoy better health. Perhaps if you're "too busy" for music you are the very one who *needs* music, and needs it here and now! Why, after all, are you hurrying so? Who's going to continue your work after you are dead and gone? And are you ready so soon to find yourself in the obituary columns, as so many of our hard-working friends already have done, and in their forties too! Take a word of warning in time. Put music into your life here and now, and prepare to live longer.

"I like some kinds of music, but a lot of it is just water over the dam, as far as I'm concerned. The stuff's too highbrow for me." So you may argue.

Don't cheat yourself of life's good things so readily. A lot that is music, and good music, is down your alley. A lot perhaps may be dull stuff, to you and me both (and let's be frank about that.). I'm all for your having honest preferences and a few prejudices. But keep your mind open. What a glorious surprise it would be if you could find that considerable music you now find dull and unenjoyable should turn out to be really good fun!

And music need not be an expensive activity for you. Whether you buy music, whether you borrow it or rent it (as most orchestras do, in part) or whether you find considerable sheet music such as you need at your local public library, depends of course on what sort of musical organization you

wish to set up or to join—whether you will attempt Sousa's marches or Johann Sebastian Bach—whether you live in a small town or a city.

But a wise suggestion might be, *don't drown your infant ambitions with too many pieces to play*. Better start simply, and master a few items. Be letter perfect in Handel's "Largo," say, before you reach out for Mozart or Brahms or Grieg.

Wherever you start—whether you contemplate a neighborhood orchestra (and we'll step into that in an early chapter) or plan some moonlight assaults on the night air with strong manly voices—you'll do well to get acquainted with the hymnbook. For hymns have both some powerful melodies and some ingenious and satisfying harmony. All the music in the world is there in the hymns, and written so simply that four voices get it all. Two fingers in either hand produce the rich chords on the piano.

Hymns are imperishable chiefly because they have satisfied men's inborn hunger for music through many years. Hymns are an excellent place to start, just because they are arranged so simply! By all means borrow a hymnbook from your church or Sunday School, or buy an extra copy or two from your church. Or maybe you'll find some at a second-hand bookstore.

Every man or woman ought to be able to sing. That is your inherent right. Get hold of some of the stuff that produces those soulful barbershop chords. If you're my age, you don't need any music to let you sing "Sweet Adeline," although it helps bring in any youngsters if you do have the music and also the words.

Every man or woman ought to be able to help *create* music. That is important. If you like music you can perform somehow, if only by beating time on an iron triangle with a spike. If rhythm is your meat, get a drum and keep time to the radio. Or buy a tin flute and pretend you're a shepherd boy, playing to your sheep. Do you think you'll feel silly? Nonsense—artists don't ever feel silly when they are working at the job of being artists. Lose yourself in your enthusiasm. That is what a hobby is for.

Music in fact is something intimate and real and something easily available to every one of us. We can fit music to our every mood, and we can through participation in music lift ourselves to a higher level of enjoyment in life. The important thing is to realize that music is there, waiting for you. And that music is not a stuffy old affair, designed only for the aesthetes. You and I can climb aboard, right now, at our own level. And the place to start is at whatever point music appeals to you—wherever it "gets" you.

Have you a further personal alibi? Do you perhaps lament, "But I have no talent?"

Well, what of it? You need more than talent to make a really good musician, I have observed. You need sincerity and honestness in your heart. And you need further a genuine love of your listener.

Talent alone can be tedious and hollow. I recall a long evening when I sat in a crowded auditorium and heard a nationally famous tenor sing. He sang well. At least he did all the tricks. He had breath control and pretty much everything else. *But he lacked humility!* He was performing for his own satisfaction, not ours. He made no effort to reach down and lift me out of my day's problems and worries. He was self-centered, selfish, and utterly conceited. I thought, as I listened to him, how truthfully Paul covered this tenor's case in the 13th chapter of First Corinthians. Remember the line?

> Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And a tinkling cymbal he was, this famous tenor, hollow and unappealing.

Keep this in mind, for it is the one big reason why amateur musical shows and such things as college glee clubs have an appeal that more finished performances sometimes lack. Aim not merely for skill and perfectness, if you want to reach out and warm the public's heart. Bring in naturalness and a genuine love of people! Without these any singer, no matter how

talented, is pouring forth merely vocal acrobatics, with no appeal whatever.

Coming back to *you*, now: Let's agree that you can grow to love music, to understand it and talk its language, and to play some sort of instrument. That should be the objective. Nothing else counts. Music as something you can control and produce at will can become valuable to you as an occupation and a hobby.

Your immediate problem is just a matter of finding out for yourself at what level you want to climb aboard. My job in this book then becomes that of making the initial steps seem attractive and reasonable. And that may be fun. Fun for both of us.

CHAPTER II

KEEP HEALTHY WITH MUSIC!

Studying healthy, normal and popular people, and comparing them with people who are jumpy and nervous and unpopular with themselves and their friends, I have come to the conclusion that one big difference is a matter of timing. For timing calls for relaxed nerves and the ability to do the right thing at the right time. Timing considers the capabilities of the audience to understand and to accept. Timing assumes that *we're* all right and that we're interested in *you.*

Watch a professional juggler. You are impressed with his ease, his sureness. Nothing is angular or jerky. Rather, his movements are so relaxed as to be almost slow.

Study your favorite actors or comedians, on the stage or in the movies or even on the air. Note their accurate sense of timing. They know what they're going to do, and they have a pretty good idea of what the audience is going to do. They don't spoil an effect by hurrying.

Some people are born with a natural sense of rhythm. It seems impossible for them to make an ungraceful move. Even if the building should catch on fire and they had to run for their lives, they'd manage to do the running easily and smoothly, and yet cover the ground.

It is fatuous to suggest that any new single accomplishment such as music can work the miracle of making the unpopular person popular. Musicians can be conceited, and some are. Musicians can also be pimply and unattractive, and ill-mannered, and selfish, and inconsiderate, and altogether boors.

But look at it this way. An unhealthy person can seldom be popular, because so large a share of his or her thoughts go to

self. If that lack of health is caused by some spastic condition (meaning the nerves contract suddenly, as in a spasm) and if music can help relax that over-nerved condition, then health —and friendliness—and charm—can begin to flow.

And why not? Music in the cow barns helps poor dumb cows to relax and let down more milk. Music in insane asylums helps the tense nerves of patients relax and makes fighting moods mellow. A physician has written a small book about this. It is called *The Doctor Prescribes Music*, by Edmund Podolsky, M.D. (131 pages, Stokes, 1939). Dr. Podolsky reports that music increases metabolism, increases or decreases muscular energy (according to the sort of tunes you play), lowers the threshold for sensory stimuli of different modes, and influences the internal secretions. Experiments show that music helps to deaden pain in the dentist's chair or on the operating table. Although the findings as yet are more spectacular in the case of those actually sick or even violent, Dr. Podolsky believes that music can some day do such things as dissolve gallstones and kidney stones, and in other ways work to keep whole people healthy and on their feet.

How can you harness music so as to make yourself more healthy?

Try to make your movements rhythmical, as if you were keeping time to actual music. A leading college football coach has started drilling his formations to music, copying the "Rockettes" at Radio City. He gets the men in place more easily and achieves better co-ordination through this procedure. And guess what kind of music he rehearses them to. A waltz!

Maybe a few dancing lessons would be helpful to you who read this book, if you are of the spastic type. After all, it is pretty hard to lift yourself by your own bootstraps. But you get the idea.

So much for your movements in walking, in operating a typewriter, in talking, eating, and doing the other routine acts of business and everyday life. Once you begin to make every move to the sound of unseen music you begin to be more graceful and more at ease. When you feel at ease you have

time to forget yourself and to look around and draw out somebody else who is more shy than you. In so doing you develop charm.

Now to look into music further. Look at the benefits that come to you from playing music, particularly when you play in a band or an orchestra, where you lose yourself to help create a larger and more harmonious whole.

When you play in an orchestra you must keep time. You have to be alert yet relaxed rather than tense. You've got to be with the crowd. You must learn to keep time accurately, to wait your space, and then at the precise moment to attack your note, not doubtfully, not halfheartedly, not experimentally, but with all that's in you.

You don't dare then be nervous or jumpy. And besides, there's less and less need of that, because now you have something big and important to concentrate on—something that takes you out of yourself. Playing music with others is mighty good training. There's fun, and there's satisfaction; and while you are forgetting yourself your tense nerves have an opportunity to rebuild and to operate in the normal way that Nature intended them to. You never were expected to superintend the workings of your own body through worry and through constant scrutiny of your sympathetic nervous system. As my father used to say, the human stomach can stand almost anything—except introspection.

In these days when so large a per cent of a doctor's cases are mental, due to nervous indigestion and kindred ailments, it is essential that you learn to relax. When you don't relax your whole digestive system becomes jerky and unreliable. Ask any amateur musician if he doesn't feel better after a Sunday rehearsal, or after an evening of playing.

The benefits of music are alike, whether you stroke a bass viol or caress a fiddle or toot a horn. I happen to be partial to the brasses, because they are clean, masculine, powerful and sturdy. And when you blow a horn you develop a chest and lungs and a diaphragm and tough belly muscles. You'll live longer because you draw more oxygen deep into your lungs and because, in tensing to reach for the hard notes, you shake

up the organs below the belt and force your newly oxygenated blood to them.

"The man who plays the French horn or tuba, or any other cup-mouthed instrument in a band, must have the physique of a hod-carrier," a bandmaster tells me. "The proper practicing of a wind instrument leads to a longer life."

The same thing can be said, of course, for singing—provided you sing under some leader's direction so that you stick to it and work at it, not quit at the first feeling of tiredness. He who sings is less bothered with lung troubles and digestive troubles than is the average man. And the habit of standing erect and drawing air deep into the lungs helps improve the posture, so that you will have fewer headaches, fewer backaches—and possibly even attain a larger success in business and in life. Many successful business leaders make a regular practice of spending at least one evening a week singing, or playing around the family piano.

A word of caution here. Any good idea can be overdone! For instance, I asked one of the doctors at Mayo clinic whether he doesn't find that music helps relax tense nerves and heal sick bodies. His answer was surprising. "What I see in my practice here is the artistic type that overdoes its music—grand opera stars, professors of music, and the like. These professional musicians sometimes push themselves until they are nervouly exhausted. You can't be much of a musician without temperament, and in time the temperament gets them down."

But we're talking about music for amateurs, not for professionals. Let's be sure to keep our music on the *fun* side, and not class it as *work*. Or as a new source of worry!

At the risk of being repetitious, I want to say again that, if you feel the need of teamwork, if you feel unimportant, then playing in a band or orchestra will lift you out of yourself and make you somebody new and different. You have a job to do now, and you concentrate on it. You learn to keep time, and then when your moment arrives to come in, you come in strong.

Also, do you feel the need for self-expression? Music lets you express yourself without your being for one moment self-conscious. Music lets you let yourself go. You can make all the noise you want, and yet be in perfect harmony with the crowd.

Music helps to make you a more interesting person to live with. You begin to develop your resources so you are an all-around personality.

Music cheers you—comforts you—keeps you company. Simple people know this, but we sophisticated mortals have become self-conscious about trusting the sound of our own voices. The Kentucky mountaineer expresses his happiness and his self-assurance by singing to his mule on the long, slow trip down the mountain. The man who has music in his soul is never lonesome.

Music is a powerful tonic. Any Army officer can tell you cases of music lifting defeat into victory, of tired men finding the energy to do more than they otherwise could do without music. Music helps to build morale. And you and I need morale; need to live with people and live with ourselves, do we not?—and to accept and meet strange and challenging situations in an unknown future!

Let's live our lives to music. And when the inevitable finish comes, let's accept it, faces forward, heading into danger, and go cheerfully, like the passengers and crew on the steamer *Titanic* who waited calmly on the deck for the icy waves, while the ship's band played "Nearer, My God to Thee."

The nervous strain on people today is terrific. Relax your tense nerves by playing something musical at bedtime. Play it yourself, no matter how crudely, if you can, for thereby you can concentrate on the music and rinse your mind of the day's worries. If you can't play, at least listen to some good music. Music is better than a detective story to erase the day's cares and prepare your mind for a good night's sleep.

Maybe you can dance a little around the living room to the radio. Why not? Dancing is motion with music. It is a means

of expressing emotion through the legs, the arms, the wrists and hands, and the body.

Speaking of dances, the daughter of a missionary, home from Hawaii on a visit, showed us recently how to dance the hula. "You hold your shoulders still," she demonstrated, "and stand on the balls of your feet. Then you swing your knees and your hips. Better practice in front of the bedroom mirror," she continued. "It's wonderful exercise for what ails you."

On the listening end of music, which is every man's privilege, whether or not he attempt to play any musical instrument himself, your radio is a wonderful help. There is an advantage however in attending public performances of symphony and opera whenever you have an opportunity. It states your public expression of faith in the importance of music in your life. And it helps you to meet other people who likewise enjoy good music. Instead of a few of you traveling some distance a few times a year to listen to a traveling symphony orchestra, as many communities now have to do, you may be able to arrange matters so your own town can have a small but ambitious orchestra of its own.

Listening to a concert or an opera can be relaxing, but it can also be hard work. Everything depends on your personal nervous system. If you "fight" the music, you'll be as nervous throughout the performance as a small boy in the dentist's chair. In that case the music won't do your tense nerves much good.

You ought to school yourself to sit through any musical performance in perfect comfort and to enjoy it. We'll talk a little more in detail later about how to listen to music. But this much for here: If you can't relax during a concert or an opera, start consciously to do the things that will make you comfortable during the performance. Eat lightly, so you won't feel distressed or logy. Take a sedative, if necessary. Carry a small book, and sneak a few pages during the dull passages, of which presumably there will be some. Carry a pad and pencil too and make notes of a speech you intend some day to make, or the plot of the great American novel you want some-

time to write, or a sales plan for doubling your company's output. [1]

"Personally, I find concerts pretty tiring," says a candid doctor friend. "But then, I'm not a musician." Well, he has other hobbies and up to now has not felt the need of acquiring the art of enjoying music.

Music probably is potent stuff. Scientists know that the vibration of shrill music will shatter a drinking glass and soft boil a raw egg. As for music's effect on human tissues, these scientists suspect that the sounds flow through you and create some sort of ennobling effect, although they can't define it. Perhaps you don't need to put the sensation into words, any more than the young swain needs to describe his reactions when he slips a timid hand around a girl's waist. Plenty of people have attempted and continue to attempt to describe music in words, but the results are often singularly dull. Let's not make that mistake here. Listening to music is a personal experience. No man knows or dares to question how you enjoy it, what you think about it, what you intend to do about it. Your tastes are your own—and make the most of them!

I think it can be easily demonstrated that music will enlarge your enjoyment of life, even though you are not a trained musician. Thereby it will help make you healthier, become happier.

How does it do it? Music gives peace of mind in a troubled world. And you don't need to know too much about it to enjoy its pleasures and share its benefits.

Music has a profound effect in developing personality. And personality, as you well know, is what you sell when you go into the market to earn a living. Music makes a bigger *you*, a broader, more sympathetic, more understanding *you*, and a person able to appreciate the rich and lovable qualities in other people.

Music helps you become better acquainted with yourself. You have some of the grace of God if you but realize it and

[1] Not all will agree with me here. See Professor Hall's ideas in Chapter XII.

use it. Your love of music helps you become un-selfconscious. Music helps you discover the best in others.

Music helps you make true friends, and friends who have ideals. Try this experiment. Whistle a strain of Beethoven, or César Franck, or Sibelius, or any other favorite, in the elevator of your office building. See if you don't get an answering strain from some other music-lover.

Music develops leadership. Here's a mob, a dissatisfied, unhappy crowd of strays. You with your music can put a purpose into the gathering; can cheer them up; can focus their destructive tendencies into a patriotic purpose; can coalesce a gathering of strangers into a friendly unit.

Music makes a man or woman a better citizen. For instance, I know a businessman, a widower, who before he comes home every night, rents a detective story from some circulating library, and reads himself into insensibility. He is not especially happy, one reason being that he is not much use to the community. And there are so many things that need to be done. Suppose he should spend an evening or two playing in a community orchestra, and by his weight and his prestige make a struggling venture an unqualified success. Who knows what good might result?

We need to bring people together and to develop a new Americanism. We need to develop pride and self-respect, not only in grownups, but in boys and girls.

A few years ago my friend Fabien Sevitzky, then an unknown orchestra leader in Boston, agreed to organize a volunteer youth's orchestra and give one concert. He printed an advertisement calling for one hundred instrumentalists. Over one thousand applied! Sevitzky selected the best hundred, drilled them, gave his concert—and then these boys and girls were unwilling to quit. They kicked in a dime apiece each week to help pay for the rent of the hall. They kept going for three years. The orchestra held its rehearsals on Sunday mornings, and Sevitzky heard plenty of protests from parents and ministers about that, until the parents attended the rehearsals and saw how faithfully their youngsters were working to bring out the best there was in that music. One or two min-

isters told Sevitzky his rehearsals did more good for some of these lads than Sunday School ever had.

I have talked with several superintendents of boys' industrial schools. They agree that the school band is a potent factor in capturing a wayward boy's ambition to amount to something the good way. The regenerative effect of appearing in public, preferably in uniform, and having people applaud him and his band, has helped put many a "tough" boy on the road his feet had never previously found, or wanted to find. P. S. If you who read this book want to make your life a little more successful and also do something with your love of music, why not help the school band in your local orphanage or county home or other state institution?

"When you talk about success through music," counsels an old Army bandmaster, "say something about the transfer of training.

"Suppose you're playing a horn. It's a good, lively march, with 120 beats to the minute. Very well, that means 120 quarter-notes you have to tongue. You have seen the notes and transferred the impression from eyes to fingers and tongue.

"If you're playing 16th notes, you have 480 mental impressions a minute, and up.

"I know of no other occupation where we have to think as fast as in music. Isn't it reasonable to assume this training carries over to your way of making a living?"

And he then goes on to tell me about various big shots who play musical instruments. Einstein, the figuring wizard, who relaxes over his violin. The chief engineer of a large manufacturing company, who worked his way through college by all manner of laborious chores and who, when fagged out, would toot his trombone for a while and go back to his studies, with his youth renewed like the eagle's.

You'll find businessmen, Army men, and even cabinet officers who relax from the pressure of their official duties by letting their subconscious minds work out the answer to a problem undisturbed while their fingers and their conscious

minds work at the keyboard to produce music. Playing a musical instrument is a good habit to form.

We live in changing times. A realist sees some clouds of uncertainty as he looks into the future. Will we enter into a phase of inflation, when our stocks and our insurance policies are worth little or nothing? Then surely the ability to make music with our own hands is one pleasure no one can take from us. The ability to sing, and to create happiness out of gloom, is something that only death can tear from us. And let us hope, if that time ever comes, we can sing well enough to cheer others, rather than add to their present sorrow.

In a book by Roger W. Babson called *Washington and Inflation* (Stokes, 1937) I found some pertinent paragraphs about the importance of cultivating costless hobbies, as Babson calls them. Learn to whittle and to tinker, Babson counsels. And learn to give entertainment, musical and otherwise. *In Russia, following the revolution, the entertainers were not only kept alive but were moved up in the social scale and subsidized by the government.*

There may be a little thought there for any of us. If the future looks uncertain to you, invest some of your time in an unselfish effort right now to make yourself of some use in the world. If other people like to have you around, for the joy you can bring, then your music may be literally a life saver if things ever prove as black as some of our forecasters tell us they can and will.

CHAPTER III

HE WANTED TO JOIN A HARMONICA BAND— BUT DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO GET STARTED!

He's a businessman in his forties, and although not rich, able to take on any activity that his fancy directs. I see him occasionally. The other noon we had lunch together at a downtown drugstore.

Out of a clear sky he said, "Fred, I'd like to join a harmonica band. My eyes are giving out on me, and I can't read much at night any more. The same goes for cards. But I used to play the harmonica when I was a kid, and I know there's real music in it. You don't happen to know of any bunch of harmonica players I could join, do you?"

Sorrowfully I had to admit that my acquaintance among gentlemen of the harmonica was zero. But I had an idea.

"Harry," I began, "the way to start something is to START. If you want to play the harmonica, and already know how, it's a cinch that a dozen or so of your friends would likewise like to play the harmonica, but probably don't know how. It's up to you to teach them.

"Now suppose you do this. Step over to our town's local music store and try all the harmonicas they have on their shelves. Decide whether you want to pay 50 cents or $5. Find out what kind of a harmonica Larry Adler plays, and get that kind, if it appeals to you. Maybe you'll want to buy a couple of Larry Adler's records and take them home, just to show yourself and your family what a work of art a harmonica can be, when played properly."

Harry hadn't happened to have heard about Larry Adler, so I told him the story. Adler was an average young man,

growing up in Baltimore. Some organization staged a music contest for amateurs. Young Adler entered the contest and taught himself the mouth organ so he could compete. Instead of playing the usual threadbare selections, he offered the judges grand opera. Of course he won that prize. He kept on developing new genius on the mouth organ. In time he was playing the harmonica well enough to appear with symphony orchestras. Special pieces have been written for him. He has played before royalty. He has made phonograph records. His is a regular Horatio Alger story.

"Suppose you buy yourself a harmonica, Harry," I went on. "Carry it around with you in your pocket. When we're sitting here at a lunch-counter, bring it out and play a tune. You know everybody here! You may feel shy the first time, but only once. After the first few notes your friends will start whistling with you, and asking for request numbers. It always works out that way.

"Do the same thing at any club you belong to. Let the harmonica be your trademark. Inside of a week or two some of your friends will come to you and say, 'I'd like to learn to play as well as that. Tell me, where do you get a harmonica? How much does it cost? Do I get one in the key of C, or G, or what?' You can answer those questions then, Harry. Right away you're an expert!

"Probably some of these fellows will want to hire a teacher. Maybe you can join a class with them. Or probably some friend of yours will say, 'Harry, my wife plays the piano, and I've got an old violin I used to play. Won't you come over to the house tonight and we'll make music?'

"And there," I said, "you'll have your pickup orchestra all started. Keep on playing and in a few weeks you'll find somebody else plays the drums, or the cornet, or at least is willing to buy a musical instrument and to learn. You can get a neighborhood orchestra going, right within your own circle of friends, if you just want to generate the initial enthusiasm yourself. That's all it takes. The way to start anything is to start!"

It should never be necessary to learn music all alone, any

more than you should be asked to teach yourself to swim all alone. It can be done, of course, and we may as well make the procedure elemental enough and reasonable enough for all comers.

If you're a beginner in music, start with a beginner's musical instrument. Not a harmonica, I should say, but a cheap tin flute (I bought one for twenty cents) or an ocarina, otherwise known as a sweet potato. There is a new variation of the ocarina, called a tonette or a saxette, made shapely and attractive out of some black plastic. You find it in most music stores for a dollar. The sheet of directions inside the box is enough to get you started playing.

There's another simple toot-toot instrument, and a better one, called the recorder. Because it is so easy to learn to play, its sales are increasing by leaps and bounds. The recorder is a flutelike instrument and is called the first good instrument made available for amateur use. It is available in soprano, alto, tenor and bass, and you can buy music for any part or all parts; also music for the recorder and piano. Considerable music is already available; or, as musicians say, "the recorder has a large literature." There is even an American Recorder Society which will help you organize local recorder groups and derive enjoyment from group music.

You can, of course, improvise a sort of instrument out of tissue paper and a comb, and hum through it. But that is kid's stuff. Get a musical instrument you respect!

A small xylophone, homemade and cheaply built, is the way some schools start the kindergarteners off in music. It works. It is easy to play. And it's a grand forerunner for the piano. With the xylophone you hammer the wooden bars directly, instead of striking the strings through the keys, as with a piano. But the arrangement of tones is the same. Xylophones run from $320 *down*. It should not be impossible to make one yourself.

With a little ingenuity, in fact, you can make a sort of violin out of a cigar box and wire, and either pick it like a mandolin or bow it like a violin. You can even play a musical saw. And of course you have seen musical acts where people

play tunes with bells—and even play a tune by rubbing a moist finger around the rim of various partly filled tumblers.

These things are fun as a hobby, but I'd suggest you branch out into the companionable phases of music. Get into a band or orchestra! Something inherent in most boys and men will be satisfied if you learn to play some band instrument. Here you combine lungs and fingers to produce music. Here are gadgets that delight your soul; shiny brass to satisfy your pride. Here is an opportunity to strut, and to strut usefully and for some purpose. Here is an opportunity to be somebody in the home town and get some fun out of it.

If you wanted to play in a band when you were a boy, why not do it now? Your town probably has a band, and there are probably places in it for both men and women. If there isn't any band now, start one! The fact that your town lacks organized music is your sign that an appetite exists which is not being satisfied.

During the early years of the reign of Franklin D. Roosevelt a vast amount of money was spent finding congenial employment for artists, and where WPA orchestras took hold they contributed something new at spots where community activity was needed. If anything like that exists in your community today why not climb aboard the program with the other souls that are music-hungry?

There may be a good high-school band in your community. Hunt up the bandmaster. Ask him if you can't attend rehearsals and sit in the back row. He'll probably be glad to have you there, to set an example to the younger people.

If there isn't any band or orchestra that you know of, try looking around. Study the want ads. You may find you can buy a secondhand cornet, or clarinet, or slide-trombone from someone who has grown tired of playing, or who needs the money. Look the instrument over. Hear the owner play it. Ask him to show you the scale, and *write it down in your own words*, so you can understand it. Maybe if you buy the horn the present owner will throw in some lessons.

Increasingly the music stores and the music departments of

department stores include a series of free lessons with whatever instrument you buy.

Or you can find plenty of good teachers. Inquire of the local church organist, or the bandmasters, or the music stores, or even the newspaper editors. Ask a few questions—the habit is a good one to form. You may be surprised, and may enjoy getting acquainted with your home city.

Suppose you are further advanced in music and move into a community and find no place to play. How would you go about getting located musically?

Start by doing a little discreet looking around. And, because life becomes so unduly complicated—with bridge, and clubs, and formal banquets, and all the other mere mechanics of living—so complicated, that is, for folks well up the social scale, do a little looking around down among the people who keep their lives simple and thus have time for the fun that comes with a less busy life.

For instance, I have heard of neighborhood orchestras made up of a businessman, a milkman, a letter carrier, a plumber, and maybe a vacuum-cleaner salesman or two. And any of their wives who may be musically interested. Don't think for a minute that the lad who changes your tire at the filling station, or the drug clerk at the corner, or the bank tellers you hand your deposit to, don't have their own means of finding amusement. You'll find they have bowling clubs, and possibly a singing society and perhaps even a young orchestra, for a lot of these lads played with the school band in high school. Your only key to admission is a sincere friendliness and an interest in music.

Our town has a Doctor's Orchestra, which has been going on for more than a score of years. The players pay a small sum themselves to buy or rent the music, and there are no paid performances. The rehearsals themselves are fun, and every so often the crowd plays of an evening or a Sunday for the crippled children, or the sick or shut-ins, and gets a hearty round of applause.

In many towns a local symphony orchestra is being organized. I imagine the makers of band instruments by this time

have all the necessary literature you need to help you get practically any musical organization started and keep it going. Your own public library too may have, or would get, a stock of sheet music, both classical, semiclassical, and popular.

Some cities have an organization such as the Hermit Club of Cleveland, a selected group of male singers and male instrumentalists who pay regular dues, hire a trained orchestra leader and choregus, and give free concerts at various places they consider worthy. Founded in 1905, the Hermit Club has attained a high level of excellence. Some years members write a show and the club stages it.

Such an organization is helpful to those of us who need a taskmaster to get us out to rehearsals, in fair weather and on foggy nights, and who lack the perseverance to tackle any tough piece alone and polish it to perfection. For those who can go it alone, of course, any trio or quartet is large enough.

For many years my friend, David R. Craig, while he was a struggling young professor of retailing at the University of Pittsburgh, was one of a string quartet. Two men and two girls made up the organization. They played almost every week. Sometimes wives and husbands came along, and sat and talked in another room. By common agreement they played nothing earlier than Beethoven, for they found out that in modern music, a note here and there played wrong made less difference than with Haydn and Mozart. After the first year they agreed not to stop for food, but to play straight through until quitting time and then go home.

They were especially fond of César Franck, and a number by Rimsky-Korsakoff. The Ravel quartet had them buffaloed because of its second movement, where the first violin and the cello play in 3-4 time and the second violin and the viola use 6-8. They tried to solve this confusion by tapping their feet on the floor, and after sixteen measures they would all burst into gales of laughter and give it up.

Their masterpiece was the Dvořák Opus 96, which was made out of the negro themes left over when Dvořák had finished his famous *New World Symphony*. Once they were tempted to give a public performance of this work. But they

agreed to play for themselves alone, and finally decided to follow this principle fanatically, with no exceptions.

Craig and the others had an interesting experience. One day he heard that the Carnegie Institute was displaying the Wurlitzer collection of priceless instruments. He looked at it longingly. Daringly he asked the caretaker, "How much would it cost to rent four of these fiddles for an evening?"

The caretaker said, "It wouldn't cost anything. In fact, we're glad to have these instruments played, it keeps them in better shape. The only restriction is that I would have to come along, to make sure they are kept safe."

A bargain was soon struck. That evening the quartet consisted of the Russian Stradivarius at $25,000, another Strad at $22,000, a Capo di Salo viola which was not for sale at any price, and a David Tecchler cello at $18,000. It was the most fun they ever had, Craig tells me. They found they couldn't play off key, they couldn't scratch, they played like competent professionals. The instruments sought their own level and brought the players up to it.

But of course, a beginner couldn't handle a Stradivarius so that it would produce any better music than a $5 fiddle out of a pawnshop.

Whatever instrument you play, you can murder it to suit your fancy, as long as you play alone. Yes, and I'll go so far as to say that if you can whistle a tune, you can play some instrument more or less naturally and more or less well.

And if you can play any one instrument fairly well, you're halfway toward playing any instrument that may take your fancy. Most orchestra and band players can handle two or three different instruments in a pinch. And nearly all of them manage to pick up something important about the piano.

"But it is paradoxical," says an instructor of the United States Navy School of Music, "that music, which is the most aesthetic of the arts, is so much a *physical* creation. You need muscles and steady nerves to produce music. You have to do a lot of real work! When I tell a young cornetist that he'll have to practice hard for two weeks before he can add an-

other degree to his scale, he doesn't believe me, but that's about the way it works out. Music is *work*."

Of course. Doing anything well is work. But music is fun too.

A lot depends on your starting out with an instrument that seems to talk your language. Get an instrument you admire and are proud of. Get one that is built for your particular angles, so to speak. If at all possible (and it should be possible) try out several instruments, and get a lot of good advice, before you buy.

During a rehearsal of a symphony orchestra I stepped on the stage and talked with some of the players. It was the rest period, and some of the musicians had stepped out into the hall for a smoke or a drink of water. Others were keeping their seats, going over some difficult passage again.

I saw a youthful, light-haired lad, holding a huge bass fiddle. In that blunt, challenging way that usually gives a man a chance to stand up and tell his story manfully, I asked, "Aren't you pretty young to be handling a cello in a grown-up orchestra like this?"

"It's all right, if you have TALENT," he said easily, catching the mood.

"How do you know whether you have talent?" I countered.

"Did you ever try one of these things?" he asked.

I shook my head.

"Sit down and try it!" he said.

I sat down and drew the thing to me gingerly, as if it were a strange animal. I sawed away as if at a violin. I was amazed to find my fingers had to take such big steps! Awkwardly I played a few bars of "Old Black Joe."

"No, you have no talent," the lad said. He had me there.

Still, I'd like to have someone bet me that I couldn't learn to play the bass viol or the cello[1] in six months' time! I'm glad to have tried the thing, and may try it again. You'll be amazed, as I was, to find how willingly your local music store will let you try out the various instruments, till you find one

[1] The difference, in brief, is that you sit down to play the cello, but play the bass viol standing up.

that fits your hand—and do it without asking you to buy. Today a musical instrument store that is awake to its possibilities is as popular as a club. You'll find dozens and dozens of youngsters taking lessons on the cornet, drums, violin, cello and even the piano.

Perhaps it's time we as a nation began to learn how to entertain ourselves. Perhaps it's time we began to invest something in other things than commercialized sports.

As a nation we have spent fortunes on huge stadiums where a small number of players put on a game of football, before a crowd of many thousand spectators. Football has become commercialized; has become almost a racket. Wouldn't it be better to develop some musical ability in a large number of people for the same money?

Recently at Rochester, Minnesota, I watched the local civic orchestra rehearse some difficult pieces. They were young men and young women, and it was a delightful thing to watch and hear them learn the intricacies of some of these pieces, even in a single two-hour rehearsal. Their hearts were in their work, even though they donate their services free.

Also at Rochester I saw a high-school performance of Victor Herbert's light opera, *Sweethearts*. It was spontaneous and delightfully fresh and unspoiled. I realized then what a great service the many small-town music teachers of the country are rendering, and how important is the work of teaching communities to sing and to play, and to generate their own amusements. These teachers of music in school live a life of unselfish devotion. Their reward is the joy of seeing young people develop into nice people. Good music is a powerful aid to character and good citizenship.

Music neutralizes all class distinctions. Music creates a common bond of interest between rich and poor. Music makes the unhappy happy, if only for the moment. Music makes friends out of strangers. Music turns a hall full of listless, unenthusiastic people into a unified and harmonious group of singers. Music is the great amalgam.

Now somewhere in the very community where you now live, there is an opportunity for you, man or woman, to help

others learn the joys of music. By so doing you will teach yourself more about music and will add to your own enjoyment.

Your opportunity may lie in the direction of taking a group of singers to sing regularly in hospitals or the Old Ladies' Home. Or perhaps you will want to help organize a Boy Scout band, or an American Legion band, or help the high school raise money to buy new uniforms and some better instruments. But help you can.

As a nation we have made vast progress in the direction of appreciating good music, during the last decade. But there is room to go. We can learn more about enjoying the classics, as played for us by the best symphony orchestras, on the radio and on the phonograph records and in concerts. We can learn too to enjoy the sound of our own tooting, and to revel in the noise of our own voices.

We very much need to be prejudiced in our own favor. I like the story of the Irish lady, a Mrs. Muggins, just returned from a trip to Europe, "Well," said Mrs. Muggins, "I've seen the Apollo Belvedere and I've seen Muggins, and of the two, *give me Muggins!*"

Don't let anybody discourage you from trying to sing. And don't let anything dishearten you when you start making music. Whoever you are, you have some traits of personality that no other mortal has or can have. What you lack in skill you can make up for in earnestness and feeling. Stick to it. Let your music express what is deep in your heart. Express it, to begin with, with a mouth harp or harmonica or ocarina, if you care to. Grow into a more nearly musical instrument as opportunity permits. Help yourself to music. Remember always, that music is part of your heritage. This book aims to help you cash in on what is divinely and rightfully yours—your privilege to enjoy music and to entertain yourself frequently and pleasurably, with the sound of your own singing and the playing of your own hands.

CHAPTER IV

SELECTING YOUR INSTRUMENT

Your likes and your capacities in music will be two distinct things, when you listen and when you sing or play. I think this is understandable. No matter how good a pianist or an instrumentalist you may become, you will find pieces composed for an 80-piece orchestra beyond your powers. As a listener, you can have whole symphonies perform, solely for your pleasure, and you can be as critical as a king. But when you play or sing, you may be able to express your emotions satisfactorily with "Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here"—a good Gilbert and Sullivan fragment, as perhaps you know.

In playing, again, you may never acquire a large repertoire, partly because of the expense of buying music, and partly because to master even a few pieces will keep you contentedly busy far longer than you would believe.

In the long run, playing music for yourself is a more absorbing form of enjoyment than listening to it, I should say, because it takes work to get there. And when you play you may be making yourself useful to society, because you are providing entertainment for others.

Possibly too, when the bills are totaled, it costs no more to buy a good instrument and learn to play it, than it does to buy an automatic record-player and a growing library of phonograph records.

But of course the two things are not incompatible. You should BOTH listen AND play. The point I want to make is that, when you listen to Beethoven, your mind becomes one with Beethoven. But when you sit down and start to play or to sing, you're just John Jones or Sally Smith, and possibly stiff-

fingered and awkward and inept and nervous. But not, let us hope, unduly fearful because of it. Keep on going—that's what counts.

Let's assume you want to learn to play some musical instrument. Very well, which instrument will you buy?

I'd advise against buying *any* instrument until you can handle it and blow on it and have it explained to you, and for that reason I wouldn't buy anything as personal as a musical instrument by mail. But it should be worth a couple of penny postcards to send to the big mail-order houses for their catalogues of musical instruments. There at least you have a starting point as to variety and price.

Somewhere along the line, and it might as well be here and now, you will need to sit down and survey yourself frankly. Ask yourself bluntly, "Am I sure enough of my mind as far as music goes? Am I willing to invest fifty or a hundred dollars in a good musical instrument, and the same number of hours in learning to play?" Only you can give the answer.

Is music to be your only hobby? Or must it share your affections, and your weekly allowance, with photography, or an expensive automobile, or roller skating, or the dance hall, or the target range, or the bowling alley, or some other field of sport or artistic activity?

How old are you? If you are young, and are just now in school, and especially if you have an opportunity to play in the school band, then by all means take hold of music and make use of it through a long and enjoyable lifetime. Again, if you are older and are established in your home and in business, you may owe it to yourself to take on music as a companion in your home life and an activity to bring you new friends. For the years between, when a young man or woman is getting located in business and possibly is founding a home, it might be wise to invest both the money and time needed for music in other ways. There are no rules. You alone can decide.

What facilities are there for learning to be a really good musician? This is important. Whom are you going to play with, what instruments are already represented? You might,

for instance, want to learn to play a viola, just to round out a small orchestra. Or learn the tuba or "Peck" horn, or alto, to hold down the bass in an already established band.

Local circumstances will decide whether you buy an orchestral instrument or a band instrument. If at all possible, don't plan to do any considerable playing alone. That becomes forlorn and almost ghoulish. Get in with some musical crowd, if you have to organize one.

I suggested in the preceding chapter that you study the want ads, with an eye to examining and perhaps buying an instrument from some present owner who has to sell or who has gone on to some other hobby. This idea has its merits and its faults. Don't buy an instrument from an owner, however needy, whom you dislike and mistrust. Don't start your musical career with an instrument that is shabby and without charm and appeal. Don't have the specter of unhappiness hanging over you when you sit down to play.

You might indeed shop the pawnshops—pardon, the loan brokers!—if only to get an idea of how far your money will go. A friendly pawnbroker tells me you don't need to buy a new mouthpiece for a horn. Merely immerse the mouthpiece in boiling water for twenty minutes, and all germs are completely killed.

I felt kindly disposed to the idea of buying a horn or violin or whatever in a pawnshop until I talked with a young man in a leading music store. His opinion was interesting.

"No, I would never advise anybody to buy any sort of an instrument at a pawnshop," he said firmly. "If it was so poor that it had to be unloaded there, you'd probably find it had something seriously wrong with it. The valves might be scored. It might be dirty—dented—injured.

"Also, it might not be musically true. A clarinet can be off an entire tone.

"Better buy your musical instrument at a music store. Then it comes to you guaranteed. You know what you're getting.

"We sell some studio-used instruments," he went on. "If you feel you need a used one, look here.

"But if you're sure you want to learn to play, and intend to

keep on playing, I suggest you get a real instrument, and a good one."

Giving due allowance for bias, this seems good advice. After all, you want to feel pride of ownership when you grasp your beloved instrument in your hand and start to play.

Of course you can start with a low-priced, second hand instrument and trade it in toward a better and better one as you go along. You may lose a little on each trade, but perhaps not much.

Try to strike a happy medium. Get an instrument you can be proud of and can grow to. And yet don't bankrupt yourself with the purchase. Keep something for lessons, for music, and for the other necessities of life.

I am assuming of course that you are buying a musical instrument that is portable, so you can carry it to rehearsals of some local orchestra, and indeed can carry it outdoors with the local band, if you get a band instrument.

If you decide to take up the piano you can still probably pick up an ancient upright piano for little more than the price of trucking it to your home. (But look out for moths! Some of these aged pianos have seen their best days.) Or if you buy one of the attractive new spinet pianos you will find that manufacturers have streamlined and modernized their product, giving you all you will need in a piano without the excessive bulk and excessive weight which pianos once represented. Today's low-priced pianos aren't built to be heirlooms, and you don't pay the price for heirlooms. But they'll probably last as long as you'll need.

No matter what instrument you decide to buy and learn to play, you might enjoy making an instrument of your own. As for instance a shepherd pipe.

For 35 cents you can send to the National Recreation Association, 315 Fourth Avenue, New York City, for a thirty-two page booklet called *How to Make and Play a Shepherd Pipe*, by Dr. Augustus D. Zanzig of that Association. Here is music in its most simplified and most durable form. And the directions are explicit and easy for any tinkerer to follow; and the materials and tools simple and not expensive.

If you suffer as much agony as I do in making a purchase, you'll need help in selecting a musical instrument. Buying a camera was an ordeal, and although I ended up by buying two, I sometimes think I guessed wrong. Buying a suit of clothes is such a nuisance that I usually take the first suit the salesman tries on me, unless my wife goes along. And in narrowing your choice down to just one musical instrument—well, frankly, I feel a little sorry for you. How and where will you choose?

My enthusiasm goes for the wind instruments, particularly the brasses. I like their trimness, their shiny gadgets, and their emphaticness. I've always thought that some day I'd pick up the cornet or slide trombone and join the band of my American Legion post. Imagine my chagrin to find that I've passed the age where a cornet is my dish. It has something to do with upper teeth that don't exactly stay in place when you blow.

"But you COULD play a clarinet nicely, I'm sure," the storekeeper suggested helpfully. I thanked him and declined.

The cornet is a member of the cup-mouthed family of wind instruments. So also is the trombone. The family also includes the trumpet (like a cornet, but a couple of inches longer), the mellophone, the French horn, the baritone, and the bass (or tuba). The Sousaphone comes in this family too. These are the BRASSES.

Playing a cup-mouthed instrument is not a contest of wind. You don't BLOW into it—you BUZZ. Your lips must vibrate. That makes a lot of difference.

In the reed family of wind instruments, a thin bamboo reed does the vibrating. The single-reed family consists of the clarinet, the saxophone, E-flat alto clarinet, and the B-flat bass clarinet. The double-reeds are the oboe, English horn and the bassoon. These are the WOOD-WINDS. The flute and the piccolo are also classed with this family, although they are not played with a reed.

Some bandmasters will advise a beginner to take up the clarinet, because in a band about one-third of the instruments will be clarinets—the same proportion as of violins in an orchestra, in fact. The clarinet is a useful instrument because

it has such a wide range. And if you master the clarinet you can shift to any other of the reed family—saxophone, oboe, bassoon, etc.

Parenthetically, the experts will tell you you probably *can't* play any two or three instruments WELL; in fact, you'll do well to play one perfectly. In the best symphony orchestras the man in No. 1 chair almost invariably sticks to his chosen instrument, and the same with the man in No. 2 chair. If any jumping around is needed from one instrument to another, they leave it to the man in No. 3 chair.

However, many intimate dance orchestras encourage players to buy and master at least two instruments. This makes for variety and also, the argument runs, may be considered as job insurance. A little versatility frequently is handy in a pinch.

Music dealers tell me you can buy a good used saxophone for $50 to $75, and that that is an easy instrument to start with. Another easy one, oddly enough, is said to be the Sousaphone (or bass horn), and you can sometimes buy a good used one for about $125. "The Sousaphone may seem to be *heavy* at first," says a music dealer, "but when you get it balanced, part of the weight is on your left shoulder and part on your right hip, and it isn't so unwieldy."

A good used cornet or trumpet, he adds, might be picked up for $20 or $30.

Your professional musician, of course, scorns secondhand instruments. A young fellow in the United States Navy Band told me his cornet cost him $150, but he doesn't regret the price. "It's best to get a new one, and to break it in yourself," he urges. "Every player has a different touch. Some men tap the valves with the tips of their fingers; some, improperly trained, with the center of the fingers. If you lend your horn to some other player he may ruin it within a week."

Well, there's time enough to develop temperament after you learn the preliminaries. Many school bands *furnish* instruments to the players, so that everybody has a "used" instrument. Even a shabby-looking instrument may have more

music in it than you are likely to draw out in the next year or two. For instance, I thought I was doing well to play an octave and a half on a cheap 20-cent tin flute, and bring in an occasional sharp or flat. But a school bandmaster took the flute and showed me how to play SOFTLY—which I hadn't been able to do; and also how to hit three complete octaves, without much trying. There is skill in even simple tasks like that.

As for the stringed instruments—well, there's the violin. It's compact and portable, and you can buy a used fiddle for about $10 and up. But a violin is a soulful, delicate and responsive instrument. If you play at all well you'll want and need a *good* violin. And if you don't intend to play it well you might better stay away from the violin altogether.

In the larger stringed instruments, the bass viol of course is huge and unwieldy, but it does add depth and balance to an orchestra. The cello—the one you sit down to play.—might be preferable, because the cello has such a large literature. Either instrument of course requires an accompaniment if played solo.

The simple stringed instruments—the ones you pluck—such as mandolin and guitar, are of course perennially popular, especially in the country. These have the merit of letting you play your own accompaniment, if you sing cowboy songs and the like. For orchestra use, however, they would quickly prove inadequate. I should say that if you know enough about music to play a mandolin or a ukelele, you could soon learn to play the fiddle. And then you'd have something.

Drums are important in either band or orchestra, large or small. Here certainly is maximum fun and possibly minimum skill—minimum for a start, at least. A music dealer brags, "If you have any rhythm in you, I can teach you to play the drums."

Some amateur bands make up their own "kettledrums," so to speak, by taking a pair of cheap tin wastebaskets and pasting paper tightly over the tops. You can make this sort of drum yourself and play it with a big kitchen spoon, or any

other sort of drumstick. (You can't tune them, of course, but just now that may not matter.)

A xylophone is a complete instrument, if you want it for solo work, or fits into most orchestras. You can buy a used xylophone for maybe $50, or you can buy a new outfit for $350. Playing a xylophone is a growing study: you can work up to handling four hammers simultaneously, playing four-part music. You'll probably grab the sticks too gingerly, at first attempt, just as visitors to Chinatown are awkward when trying to eat with chopsticks. But get a firm grip on them, and start playing. You'll soon find where the notes belong.

Any musical organization needs variety and balance, of course; but to me it is understandable that many of the young lads I see taking lessons at music stores are learning some one of the brasses, such as the cornet. Here is healthful training—playing a horn develops stout lungs and a diaphragm "like a cannon-ball," as one young musician tells me. The conscientious horn player probably develops good nerves and possibly sound digestion.

From the moral point of view, giving a young school lad an instrument he can strut with is important. "Teach a child to blow a horn, and he'll never blow a safe!" is a slogan of the music world. Schoolboys are less destructive when brought into the school band. They feel they are important citizens. They are deriving something useful from their skill, as well as giving entertainment. And so, plenty will tell you, music education is as important as the A-B-C's.

I'd suggest you get acquainted with your local music store. Here may be an institution with a wholly wholesome influence in the community.

You'll spend some money for musical instruments, to be sure. You may at times begrudge the study and practice needed to master an instrument. You may regret selling your soul to a slide trombone. But how about your friends who spend their spare cash and all their idle time in fishing? Did you ever look closely at a fish? Nothing companionable about a fish's expression, is there? I would hate to think that any large share of my entertainment was dependent on such a

dumb animal as a fish. For me I'll take practically any musical instrument.

No matter what the instrument, some can play with precision and charm, while others are aimless and dull.

I recall a summer day in 1918, when a group of us, student aviators in the Navy then, were attending the lighter-than-air training school. Most of us were pretty much awed by the system, and when our turn came to be Officer of the Day we rang the half-hours on the ship's bell in a lackadaisical way.

One day a friend of mine who was Officer of the Day for those twenty-four hours, stepped up to the bell and tapped out the six strokes—three o'clock—in a snappy, musical way. It was as refreshing as a breath from a cool ocean. In even such a routine task as striking a bell, a man can express personality, breeziness, and joy of life.

Any of us who embark into music might give a little thought to that matter of expressing joy of life in everything we do.

If you appear before an audience, cultivate a natural, ingratiating manner. Show you are at ease. Have confidence in your training, in your instrument, and in the audience's ability to recognize a good thing when it sees something good. In other words, *expect to make good.*

You'll hear that even the greatest artists experience stage fright just before going on the stage. Possibly they do. So do the best after-dinner speakers—and whenever a speaker reaches the time that he DOESN'T have some concern as to his audience you may find he's talking mechanically and without putting much heart in his work.

A little stage fright, properly controlled and at the right time, is a good thing. Don't dodge it. Just make sure you are properly rehearsed—take care that your shoes are comfortable—and then, humming a little tune to build up your courage, step forward and do your act. If you feel a little shy, that may be a help. After all, as a friend of mine says, all the really nice people ARE shy at times. That is part of the secret of charm.

CHAPTER V

HOW TO ORGANIZE A NEIGHBORHOOD ORCHESTRA

If you become earnest in your music, you will find yourself building up a musical library. And much you have to choose from. A weighty but thoroughly readable tome called *The International Cyclopedia of Music and Musicians*, edited by Oscar Thompson and published by Dodd, Mead and Company (1939) lists 3,500 books on music and musicians.

I don't know how many music books there really are. I looked in the files of the Library of Congress and got tired trying to count the English and American titles alone, let alone the Spanish and French and German and Scandinavian.

You can, and perhaps will, build up your personal music library along the lines of your own fancy.[1] Are you interested in the life story of some certain composer? You will find books that make you almost a contemporary of Schubert and Wagner and the rest. Are you fascinated by the mechanical construction of music? You can find books that look like a headache to less studious minds.

"All stringed instruments come from the bow-and-arrow," says a friend of mine at the United States Patent Office. "The primitive warriors found the taut string produced different sounds at different tensions. And because it was the sound of battle and frequently the sound of victory, it was a most satisfying sound.

[1] Various professors of music I consulted suggested a total of about thirty books they have found of help to amateur music-lovers. Many of these books no doubt repeat the same information. You would hardly need to read more than one or two. Oddly enough, there seems as yet to be no one or two "best" books on music. But there are several good ones, written in a popular and readable way.

"You've noticed," he added, "that the harp is still made in the shape of a bow drawn together with a tight string."

Books, books, books. Where to find something brief and practical; something you can put to immediate use if, say, you wish to organize an orchestra right in your home community?

For answer I refer you to the National Recreation Association, 315 Fourth Avenue, New York City. Send 35 cents for the fifty-page booklet called *Starting and Maintaining a Community Orchestra.* It helps you over the preliminary phases and cites actual examples of what other communities are doing and have done.

I assume you have already canvassed your local well-wishers and have some funds in hand. You'll need money for instruments (though most musicians should be able to furnish their own, except for the kettledrums and maybe the cello), for music, for advertising, and as important as anything, to give a feeling of permanence and substance to your organization and make its members feel they belong to a going concern. Later on, for instance, you'll want to give a dinner of some sort to the members. Or a picnic. Or present each member with a lapel-button, denoting his membership. Yes, you'll need some money. Enlist the support of local boosters, for you can hardly hope to clear enough just from ticket-sales.

You'll need encouragement too. That means both a place to practice and a place to play. And an audience to play to. Perhaps some local Sunday School would like to have a good orchestra. Perhaps there's some YMCA organization that can use music and will be glad to sponsor you. Or an American Legion post may want to get back of your embryo orchestra and give you recognition and standing. Have some purpose for your organization. Set a date not more than ten weeks ahead and plan now to give a concert on that date. Your gang will seem woefully ragged, and you may wonder if you can ever get them to play together within three months. But if not in three months, you perhaps couldn't accomplish results in three years. In fact, you bump into the law of diminishing returns if you try to maintain the pressure for too long. Better work hard and fast and get your concert done, and let the

players make their public appearance before their friends and relatives. That may help your cause as much as anything.

(P. S. If your amateur organization is still pretty amateurish, let the public showing be a complimentary affair, for friends and relatives; not a paid-admission concert. End the evening with free food, and make it hilarious and informal, so that your guests will have a good time, even despite a little sour music. Or better yet, try out your growing talents on a children's home or a hospital first, where the audience is not so critical. I am reminded by experts that great harm has been done the cause of music by "a boring, ragged and incompetent performance by an amateur orchestra who may be thoroughly enjoying themselves but practically killing their audience.")

The booklet referred to above states confidently that "any community which can support a high school can support an orchestra." The job calls for musicians—true; and leaders. But leaders are being turned out by the national schools of music. As for musicians, high-school bands are teaching thousands of young people to play, but when they enter business life the community fails to make use of them.

So, the booklet asks, why not organize a community orchestra around the present high-school band? Or hold an evening rehearsal, one night a week, to which outsiders may come and bring their instruments. From then on, it's up to the conductor. If he's wise, he'll pair off a poor player with a good one; he'll put some good first violins *in the back*, so as to help support the weaker players. And he'll work earnestly to show progress, realizing that only by feeling they are progressing will the players continue to attend rehearsals.

Selecting a leader is all-important, the booklet mentions. Sometimes the ideal person steps forward and helps organize the new local orchestra. Other times the perfect leader has to be discovered.

It might well be that you who read this book would want to help organize a community orchestra. You look around for a leader, and find none. Very well, lead the thing yourself! Why not?

But how to start? You have seen other orchestra leaders

work, and the job looks easy. But now that you have to step into strange shoes, you feel shy.

Well, start the simplest way. Get yourself a baton—they don't cost much. (Some leaders use just a lead pencil, or roll up some music and keep time with that; but a baton looks and feels more professional, and you're entitled to that help.)

The main thing, of course, is to teach yourself to beat perfect time. If you are inexperienced in this, you may decide to practice in front of the mirror to the tick of a metronome and perhaps a phonograph record. Use your right hand to keep time, and your left to bring in the players, or indicate expression. Practice sufficiently so that you feel at home with the baton in your hand—and then forget all about yourself. Some orchestra leaders work themselves into a sort of frenzy when they are rehearsing. Facial expressions are unimportant —it's earnestness and feeling that get over to your listeners.

A good orchestra leader should be either an extrovert, who likes to be out there in front of a crowd, or he should be the studious type who enjoys the rehearsals and looks on the actual concert as a necessary nuisance.

Probably anybody with an accurate sense of rhythm can lead an amateur orchestra for a while; at least until you find it worth while to hire a professional leader. However, the job really is not as simple as you might think. You'll find articles in some of the music magazines, illustrated with sketches, showing how a bandmaster leads a certain piece. One high-school bandmaster says it is as much a study to learn to lead a band or an orchestra as it is to master a musical instrument. Orchestra leaders tell me the job calls for deep feeling and an immense amount of knowledge.

A certain amount of showmanship may be helpful; but don't sicken your players. If you've ever attended any orchestra rehearsals, you know that no amount of gesturing at the actual concert is going to turn ragged players into professionals. What happens at rehearsals is what counts. If the lads aren't taught to play together then, no amount of gymnastics at the last minute will make musicians out of them.

I've seen orchestra leaders, in a puzzled moment, stop and

ask "Can any of you people help me explain what I'm trying to get at in this passage?" That seems a wise system. Don't be a know-it-all unless you really do know. Invite the co-operation of your players. After all, even if you were brilliant, you can't play every instrument in the band.

A few weeks ago I attended rehearsals of a Middle West civic orchestra. The young people did very well with a waltz called "The Sleeping Beauty," by Tschaikowsky, and with the familiar three dances from *The Bartered Bride* by Smetana. Then they swung into a Norwegian folk dance. The young orchestra leader stopped them with the rat-tat-rat of his baton on the cement floor.

"Music doesn't mean a *thing*," he said, "if you don't accent the first beat of every bar. That produces the rhythm. Now try it again, and put some emphasis on the first note of every bar."

With that change the piece took on a new lilt and a new catchiness.

You might keep this in mind, if you are ever called upon to drill a band or orchestra. Show the players how emphasis on the first note of each phrase makes a dramatic difference. Sometimes the emphasis is almost imperceptible: it should never be enough to distract. But in many pieces it adds a new gaiety. Most of your foreign folk music has an almost exaggerated accent, you will notice. It seems to help the dancers hold their heads a little higher, to keep better step, and to swing their arms a little more joyously. A simple thing, too. Keep it in mind even when you toot your tin dime-store flute.

Now that I've said that, let me append the fuller comment of another music specialist. It's so easy to make misstatements when you attempt short cuts!

"It isn't quite accurate to say that you always accent the first note of every measure," he says. "Or rather, when you say it that way you are putting the cart before the horse.

"Most instrumental music developed from the dance," he explains. "In a dance you have a natural recurring emphasis. The composer writes the music so that it is easy for you to follow the natural pulsation. He divides it into artificial divi-

sions, called measures, so that the natural pulsation of the tune usually comes on the first beat of the measure."

Well, I doubted this, but I tried it out on even such a stately piece as Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*. And surely enough, accenting the first note of each measure does give new liveliness to a piece, without detracting from its dignity.

Organizing and drilling a band or orchestra calls for real native ability, plus large quantities of endurance and patience.

Try to have your crowd large enough so that, even if some players skip a rehearsal, you still have enough to provide volume in each department. Also, it may be well to carry along a larger number than actually play well, in the hopes of developing good talent in the future. Sometimes earnestness makes up for present lack of skill. If you have a player who occasionally misses or flats a note, let him ride along, but caution him to play softly.

Experts agree that a good teacher can teach any average man to play practically any instrument, provided he is interested in learning. Provided, too, of course, your man is normal physically.

As for selecting your instruments, an expert writes me: "From the standpoint of a neighborhood orchestra, I would say that almost any combination of instruments would work out satisfactorily, providing the piano were used as a foundation. In every neighborhood there are stringed instruments of all kinds and especially plectrum instruments, which are easy to start on, inasmuch as one could see exactly where to put the fingers and there is no problem of bowing involved. Such instruments used to be very popular and from all indications are going to come back very strongly as instruments for those who wish to play in small community ensembles."

One thing it might be well to remind your players of is this: the best musicians, like the best writers, are those who keep in the background. They don't call attention to themselves by their mannerisms. A good musician should be like a windowpane: you look *through* it, not *at* it.

Similarly, the musician is there to interpret a composition,

not to walk a tightrope, or put on an act, or otherwise exhibit himself. The music is the thing; the performer secondary.

Two things will help your young band or orchestra.

The first is to make your own phonograph records and play them back so your crowd can hear them. Thus they will for the first time appreciate their best points and be conscious of some of their mistakes. The result may be stimulating, it may be humbling, but at least it should be salutary. It may even teach some things to the leader! Perhaps the man with the baton is calling out his directions in a way that sounds jumbled and vague. Perhaps he elides important syllables. Here's a chance to correct careless speech too!

Listening to a play-back of actual phonograph records will be especially helpful if you do it periodically. *Date your records and file them away carefully for future reference.* Later on, when you are somewhere near "good," it will be interesting to listen to some of your ghastly early struggles and compare them with your later, more polished successes.

I recently bought a wire recorder and make occasional use of it in improving my piano playing and—don't laugh—my public speaking. Also, I have recorded for permanent enjoyment and study some choice programs by the First Piano Quartet and such masters of the keyboard as Eddie Duchin. As for practicing, you'll find a wire recorder a truthful, sympathetic and honest, even painfully honest, companion.

Another thing that will help—and I refer especially now to a band—is the judicious use of sex in music.

Several people have called my attention to the fact that, when the American Legion band arrived at a national convention with a drum majorette, the convention chiefs didn't know what to do about it. The idea seemed somehow shocking and out of place. But the crowd liked having a pretty girl lead the music, and now you find girl drum majors in Legion bands, in high school and college bands.

A bandmaster tells me that the drum majorettes in his high school are honestly selected for their figures (the woman gym teacher takes care of that!), but they must be up in their

studies too. The bandmaster talks to them personally, like a Dutch uncle. He tells them frankly he wants them to put a little zest into the parade, but *that's all.*

How about music?

Well, some music you'll want to buy. Your standard symphonies range from about $8 to $25 or $30, for a full orchestra. You may be able to acquire a few of the standard overtures and symphonies, and some of the popular Victor Herbert or Jerome Kern or Irving Berlin selections, and no doubt your organization will do so. Because caring for this sheet music is an important task but is tedious, most orchestras pay their librarian a couple of dollars for each rehearsal.

Some orchestras exchange music with neighboring orchestras, so that they can pool their resources. Thus if each of five orchestras invests $500 in music, they would have a combined library worth $2500—a sizable assortment.

Most symphony orchestras rent the music for selections they play but seldom. The usual rental is 25 per cent of the purchase price.

What pieces should your little orchestra begin with?

"I would suggest any of Stephen Foster's songs, some of the better Negro spirituals, and songs of the western plains," suggests a musical friend. "Most everyone has heard some of these already and could learn them rather readily."

Start with *any* tune you have heard and like, comments another friend.

What you play probably will depend on: (a) the skill of your players; (b) the amount of time you wish to practice; (c) the amount of money you have to spend.

Better learn to play a few pieces well than commit mayhem on a large number of pieces that deserve better at your hands.

There may be more music in simple pieces than you realize. Recently I heard the Indianapolis Symphony play a fantasy based on three Stephen Collins Foster themes, by an Americanized Russian composer named Arcady Dubensky. When the violins gave "Beautiful Dreamer" all the force and beauty they had, they nearly lifted me out of my seat. Seldom have I experienced such powerful music anywhere.

CHAPTER VI

MAKING A LIVING OUT OF MUSIC

Let's talk a bit about music as a means of making a living.

It isn't. Not a very good one. I say that, knowing that if you are a James Melton or a Mary Van Kirk you will disregard all cautious advice and forge ahead to a professional career at any cost. But if you are the conservative type who listens to advice, then the safe counsel is that music is a precarious and tedious ladder to climb. The irregular hours call for considerable self-discipline if the would-be singer or player intends to amount to something.

For instance, the assistant superintendent of a state industrial school for boys was telling me recently of a crack quartet of cornetists he developed a few years back. The boys got on their feet and all four of them found jobs. One is manager of a store, and doing nicely. The other three have equally good jobs.

"But do you know," lamented the assistant superintendent, who is also the bandmaster, "not one of these boys has gone on with his music? Any one of them could make a living out of his playing."

I suggested that dance orchestras have to play at night clubs and other places, and at all hours of the night, and that a boy who has once got into trouble might better take a job clerking in a store than playing in an orchestra, if the orchestra would lead him into temptation. And anyway, music as a livelihood is uncertain and unromantic. But no doubt the training in concentration they acquired in band practice helps them in *any* job.

Bizet used to say of music: "A sad trade, but a splendid art."

To be able to play a tune now and then, *and to stop when you get tired*, is wonderful. But to have to manipulate music —to rehearse a piece so you can lop fifteen seconds off the final chorus and wind up a radio program exactly on the dot —that becomes work. The average listener has little idea how rigidly these musical programs he hears on the air are rehearsed, pruned and rehearsed again. The announcer must have his final thirty seconds to make the closing announcement, and make it calmly. If there has been an all-day rehearsal, with relentless polishing and timing and if the orchestra leader keeps one eye on the huge red second hand of the studio clock and writes "Omit second chorus" or "Skip from B to Coda" on a blackboard and holds it silently aloft, you who get the program over the air are not conscious of this sweat and grief.

Nor do you perhaps have any conception of the costliness of modern music. I heard a young men's orchestra playing in a Chicago restaurant. Each of the half dozen players could handle two or three instruments, and they were carefully racked in front of each of them. The orchestra leader played on a white ivory accordion. During an intermission I stepped up and asked him, "How much did that accordion cost—about $750?"

He smiled at my ingenuousness and said, with a big city smile, "$2,000." Then he showed me some of the extra couplers and other devices the accordion carried. It was a custom-made job, of course, and a beauty.

I don't know how much the young men in that orchestra make, or how many weeks each winter they are kept busy. Perhaps they are doing very well. Perhaps again, when once the novelty wears off, they will be pushed aside in favor of something new and different. The show business is always precarious. It calls for showmanship, for luck, for resourcefulness, and for tremendous courage.

But some of course will grow up and will find jobs in music. Their best ladder to climb will probably start locally, just like Jack-and-the-Bean-Stalk's did. Get all you can out of your local church choirs and local amateur shows. If there is a radio

station near you, work up an act and arrange for an appearance. Never mind about getting paid at first, but get yourself before the public! Save any clippings of yourself. If you think you have a unique way of singing or playing, make a phonograph record of yourself, so you can mail it to someone in a big city.

Perhaps you can think up some unusual organization. I have heard a quartet of railroad brakemen sing, and they were not bad. Anything out of the ordinary may catch the public fancy.

Perhaps you can go on and on, and up and up. That is a long and lonesome road to climb. When you get to the top you have to be better than thousands of others, and you may come to hate music as you hate any other form of drudgery. But you asked for it, and take success when it comes, and don't be ungrateful.

For me I prefer to look on music as a means of companionship, as a recreation and an amusement. If any of us have the capacity to entertain ourselves, we thereby save the money we would otherwise waste on public entertainment. As Benjamin Franklin so shrewdly observed, a penny saved is a penny earned.

So much for negative advice.

On the positive side, Burton Garlinghouse, expert singing teacher who has graduated not a few professionals into radio and concert work, insists there is considerable to say in favor of music as a livelihood.

"Better to be happy as a saxophonist in a jazz band than be discontented as a respectable clerk or office man," says he.

"What's more, your discussion says nothing whatever about the opportunities in music as a teaching profession," he goes on. "There is room for far more music teachers than we now have."

As to that, however, I leave you to the various music magazines, and the schools of music. Sufficient now to encourage new beginners to find happiness in music. If any reader of this book wants to go on into music as a profession, that is his

personal decision. It is well to develop spare-time resources we can fall back on if our main job goes sour, and perhaps a man or woman who embarks on music solely for entertainment may find how to use music for money. If that is your wish, go ahead bravely and succeed. Other men and women have made good with no greater initial talent than yours.

Even if you don't regard music as a livelihood, the proper use of music may add to your productivity.

Factories are just now finding out that weariness vanishes and accidents are reduced by piping in a half-hour musical program during the late morning and the late afternoon. Many a weary wage earner has learned that relaxing to music at home in the evening helps refresh his whole body.

Many of your natural leaders develop the ability to lift themselves by their bootstraps out of any period of low. In fact, they seem to do some of their best thinking at times when they look the glummest. And perhaps they do.

A bandmaster tells me, "We have not produced a great leader of men, since the time of Christ, who has not played a musical instrument." He goes on to submit an impressive list. George Washington was an admirer of the harpsichord. Lincoln loved music, and tried to play, though indifferently. General Pershing of the first World War played the flute and attempted the fiddle. Knute Rockne, noted football coach, carried his flute wherever he went and played "Swanee River" while figuring out a knotty play.

Former Governor Charles Edison of New Jersey plays the piano, he continues. The governor of Texas and the mayor of Seattle are able musicians. Onetime mayor LaGuardia of New York City, himself a son of an Army bandmaster and a gay little figure in his prime, enjoyed leading a band.

Charles G. Dawes and the late William H. Woodin, former Secretary of the Treasury, both played and composed music and are kindly remembered by musicians everywhere.

J. Edgar Hoover, director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, turns on an automatic phonograph when he has an

opportunity to dine at home, and rests his tired nerves by listening to symphonic music. And so on.

A bandmaster friend adds this encouraging word. "You're probably never too old to learn to play a musical instrument, if you *want* to learn. A man named Eldon Baker took his first lesson on the tuba at fifty-five, and became an artist in five year's time."

As in most human activity, interest and persistence seem the most important requisites. No one can supply those for you but yourself. But like all other habits, music is a wholesome habit, and an easy habit, to form.

Accidents will happen, and because musical instruments are hollow and are purposely fragile—so they will vibrate—they sometimes get injured. What to do when someone trips over a bass viol or puts a foot through a cello? Or drops a violin?

I talked with the man who heads the repair department of the United States Navy School of Music. He found he had a natural aptitude for this kind of work, and by writing to the various musical instrument companies, he obtained specific information. Not only that, but he uses authentic repair parts and even the official kind of glue.

"I can put a horn back into condition, provided it hasn't been tampered with," he said, showing how he smooths out the dents. "Also I repair violins and the like.

"When it is necessary to repair or to patch a split, I have to take the instrument apart at the seams. I can't do that if the pieces have been cemented. The wrong kind of glue practically makes it impossible to repair a damaged instrument.

"Clarinets and other wood winds sometimes split, even if new," he went on. "The maker can't guarantee the wood. These instruments can be repaired and glued and held together by an inconspicuous band of silver. Also I put on new rubbers and new corks, and tighten the hinges."

He went on to say there's a big difference in instruments. It's not just the maker's name that makes a good instrument—it's the workmanship. He says he can see what gives some instruments their personality.

I don't know that your town needs a music repairman; but if there isn't one already there, it might mean a job for somebody. And the various instrument makers will no doubt be glad to give you information, and to sell you parts—provided they find they can have confidence in your workmanship. Probably a personal visit to some of the factories would be helpful, if you plan to embark on this phase of a musical career.

CHAPTER VII

SINGING IS A LOT OF FUN—AND YOU CAN DO IT!

It's a funny thing about singing. Every one of us has a voice; practically everybody can speak; and so why can't all of us sing?[1]

Perhaps a few people are tone-deaf, meaning they can't recognize one note from another. This seems to be an inborn trait, like color blindness, and you can do little or nothing about it. But the per cent of people thus afflicted is small.

Is there then some magic which a person must practice before he or she can start to sing? I asked a voice teacher this question. He replied that practically anybody can learn how to sing, if he wants to.

The first thing you need, he says, is to learn to breathe. You must breathe as a child breathes, using the lower part of your chest. If you find you can't breathe this way, he says, lie flat on your back, so that your shoulder muscles relax, *and then you will have to breathe from the diaphragm.*

The reason for this is that you must keep your neck and face muscles relaxed, and they can't be relaxed if the effort of breathing is forced on your shoulders and neck.

"Make it clear that singers don't have to make faces," he says. "A singer should keep his face natural and relaxed, as in animated speech. Let the facial expression change as the song progresses: This is possible only when the face muscles and jaw are relaxed. And only when face muscles and jaw ARE relaxed can the throat muscles be firm and open."

[1] "That's easy to answer—if your question isn't just a rhetorical one," says Burton Garlinghouse. "The reason why all of us can't sing is because singing is an art, not a natural function; any more than playing the piano."

A vocal tone is agreeable only if produced in a space big enough so it isn't cramped, he goes on. So think of your throat as a megaphone. You want a full, round sound instead of a thin, pinched sound.

Most beginners don't know how to stand for good singing, he finds. They tip back on their heels, and this does something to their voices. He encourages his pupils to stand well, or sit well, with the body balanced.

He has a little exercise for this. "Raise your hands high over your head," he says. "Now stand on your toes. Settle back slowly, your weight still on your toes and with your heels barely touching the ground. KEEP YOUR WEIGHT FORWARD WHILE YOU ARE SINGING. And now," he adds, "drop your arms, but not your chest.

"Sing with your body poised this way," he demonstrates, "and your tone has life and vitality."

How about the words of songs? Is English a good singing language, or must a singer use a foreign language?

"Singing is only an extension of the perfectly natural speech," he answers. "Many people speak slovenly, and when they start singing, they carry those slovenly habits over into their vocal work. That is why I prefer where possible to start a singer in an unfamiliar language, so that he can cultivate consciously correct phonetic habits. Later these habits are transferred back to English."

For the beginner he comes back to his original thesis: that two technical details only are important to singing. They are SPACE and ENERGY. If you keep those two things in mind, you'll always sing well.

Singing becomes more and more of a pleasant habit as you continue to use it, he finds.

"I have been amazed," he says, "at the success of a certain organist at a local moving-picture theater. Words are thrown on the screen, and this organist kids the audience into singing. He has been a feature of this theater for six or eight months, and people are getting quite a kick out of hearing their own voices."

If you enjoy singing, then sing whenever you have an opportunity.

It is a wholesome practice to sing in the morning shower. It establishes cheerfulness as the tone for the day. And it gets some air in your lungs.

You can often finish a social evening with a song or two. Most people like to sing, once someone else does the starting.

My wife and I sometimes sing when driving along in the country. It fills in the time. It relaxes us. And we enjoy that little interlude of song.

What songs should you sing? There are dozens of good ones. "Roaming in the Gloaming" is easy and tuneful. "Down by the Old Mill Stream" is good. "Oh! Susanna" is a dandy. Most of Victor Herbert's songs sing well, for the reason that they are chiefly melody, with no tricky changes of key to embarrass you.

It may interest you to know that few opera singers can sing "Home, Sweet Home" properly. The reason is, they are too affected. They try to put things in there that don't belong. Galli-Curci was one of the few great singers who could render this song and keep it simple.

I recall my own brief stay with the Amherst College glee club. The leader interrupted us one day—we were singing a medley of college songs—and said, "If you can't sing THESE songs and put life into them, you'll never be able to sing ANYTHING." He made us sing as if every piece were new and fresh, and not as if we were bored with the tune. That of course is important in any art. If the sound of your own voice wearies YOU, how much enthusiasm can you expect from your audience?

If your voice seems harsh and unpleasant, perhaps you're trying too hard. Don't strain! Many voices lack sweetness and clarity at full force but are rather agreeable when the person sings softly. You might borrow the trick of singing through a megaphone—after all, it worked well for Rudy Vallee! Or hook up a microphone to your home radio and sing through

that. With today's amplifying devices no singer needs to screech.

The new United States Army of a million or more soldiers has made ample plans for singers. I talked with an officer in the Morale Division whose task it was to make up an Army songbook of several dozen of our national favorites. That had not been easy, for many of the best pieces were copyrighted; but by convincing the composers that the songbooks would be used only for Army purposes, he was able to get permission to print. After all, he argued, if a million soldiers-in-training become familiar with certain songs while in uniform, what more natural than that they should step into a store and BUY those songs when they get back to civil life!

A briefer songbook (words only) and one which is readily obtainable is titled *Let's Harmonize* and comes to you with your membership scroll when you join that outfit hilariously labeled "The Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber-Shop Quartet Singing in America." You could do a lot worse than to write the secretary of that outfit, at Tulsa, Oklahoma, for an application blank. There may be a chapter of the SPEBSQSA right in your own city. If not, you can organize one.

We'll be a healthier, happier, more united nation if we learn to sing together, as we used to do more frequently in the days before the automobile and the radio.

Well, let's start to do some singing here and now. After all, the way to start is to START. And singing is the simplest, cheapest and most accessible way of making music.

Singing takes, or should take, first place in the field of entertainment. Everybody has a voice, and even though many men sing through their noses, the music sounds sweet to their own ears. And in a crowd of other singers they find they don't feel timid or self-conscious.

Rhythm—the basis of all music—is inherent in us. The nursery rhymes of childhood are in more or less good rhythm. Most of us sing in Sunday School and church and in school. Later we grow self-conscious about the sound of our own voices.

Get over the self-consciousness and you'll be happier. Did you ever notice that *nobody* has ever succeeded in being popular with *everybody*? They assassinated Lincoln, didn't they? And Caesar? And Christ? Yet Lincoln and Christ lived their lives according to the dictates of their conscience, and the echoes of their lives live after them.

Be yourself. Act natural! And if music is in you, sing—and encourage others to sing. It may be your opportunity for leadership.

The most important thing in singing, of course, is the melody. Next comes the support, or the harmony. Most of the support is in the bass. It is well to learn a few simple chords on the piano, and in singing to have some idea what note will harmonize with what.

Simple as harmony is, many singers never get it straight. There's generally at least one hearty singer in any group who thinks that harmony consists in carrying the melody along, an octave lower.

Men's voices have a power which women's voices do not. If you can bring a crowd of men together for an occasional sing, I think you'll find they will enjoy the performance. And so will any listeners. We used to sing regularly in college, for the fun of it. Have today's young people grown too supercilious for that sort of thing? And if so, will the Army training help to acquaint us once more with the sound of our own voices, as it will in some instances familiarize thousands of men with their own feet, and with healthy hunger, and with the sweat of their own brow?

I consider myself fortunate that, back in grammar school and high school, we were taught to sing. Our Oak Park High School tackled such oratorios as *Elijah* and *The Creation* and even *The Messiah*. It is wonderful to get that magnificent music deep into your fibers. Once you learn those pieces, as you learn them only by rehearsing them over and over to the piano, and finally hearing your puny voices exalted by the addition of the soloists and the complete orchestra, it is pos-

sible to walk down any road to the strains of the "Hallelujah Chorus." And when you get music like that into your life, you have something real to tie to.

Community sings are on the increase. Some are long notable, such as the regular Sunday evening sing at the Million-Dollar Pier at St. Petersburg. Other communities come together periodically and lift their joint voices in song. It is a wholesome undertaking and one which deserves to grow.

The service clubs make a faltering use of music, regarding it as a messy duty rather than a privilege. Perhaps the reason is that men at a service club usually sing sitting down. And they sit around tables, so that many of them face each other—a sure way to breed awkward self-consciousness. The best singing is done while standing up and facing all in one direction, so that no man can look into another man's face and laugh at the faces made while straining for a note. Plenty of people look funny while singing. The most ardent singer I know is a prominent businessman who is afflicted with timidity except when singing. You don't laugh at the faces he makes while singing, for the simple reason that his thoroughgoing earnestness impresses you.

Perhaps you have noticed that big business makes growing use of music in welding an audience together. For instance, the American Bankers Association holds every year a Graduate School of Banking, taking over a whole university for a month and conducting classes with real professors and written tests and definite standards. The banker-students eat together in the college commons. Every lunch and supper starts with a couple of songs, with a barrel-chested song-leader doing the leading. It is good exercise for lungs and stomach, the men find. Some of them aren't used to singing, and some think they are going to resent being made to sing. But they find they enjoy it.

Being a song-leader calls for a clear knowledge of mass psychology, I am told. You must handle the crowd like a happy group of children. Get them coming your way—keep them acquiescent—be kindly but firm—make the affair both

a joke and an adventure and a drill that leads to better results. If the gang has made progress today, don't be afraid to say so. Everybody likes encouragement.

Incidentally, you may find the people in your particular crowd would like to sing but are timid about starting. Why can't you supply the initiative and the leadership? You had enough initiative to buy and read this book, didn't you? Carry on with that same independence of spirit and make the most of it. The world is looking for leaders such as you!

Yes, I know you're timid too. Yes, it would be a lot easier for you to hug the background, along with the rest. But get out front there and become used to the sound of your own voice. You won't feel so timid after the first time.

Leadership is important. Oratory is important. The power to sway men by the sound of the human voice is a real gift. If you can turn a loose crowd of men into a cohesive and harmonious body of singers, you have thereby done a powerful deed.

It will help if you take the job seriously. I watched a small-town orchestra leader, for instance, start his rehearsal. There was plenty of greeting and joking back and forth BEFORE the rehearsal started. But a short minute before he rapped for order, the leader seemed to "grow." His face washed off its joking mood; he straightened a little higher; he seemed almost a different person. The rehearsal was not an unfriendly affair, but it was definitely businesslike. It was as if a timid individual suddenly took on the courage given him by an impressive uniform.

Practice up on a few favorites, if you plan to lead any singing. Most of the current stuff is too fast, too complicated, and the words are drivel. Go back to the era of "The Old Mill Stream" or "Shine On, Harvest Moon," or some of the Victor Herbert melodies, or almost anything by Rudolf Friml or Sigmund Romberg.

And don't be ashamed to make full use of our hymns. There are some dandies. "The Spacious Firmament on High" was just made for men's voices. There are plenty of others.

Many of us don't realize how excellent our American songs

are. And how popular they are, not only at home but throughout the world. In peaceful pre-war 1938 my wife and I spent three days on a coast steamer from Bergen to the south of Norway. A crowd of high-school lads got on board—they were accompanying their basketball team from town to town —and we gathered around the piano. To my surprise they knew "Old Black Joe" and "I've Been Working on the Railroad" and a host of others. And they sang these familiar old tunes with understanding and enthusiasm.

Most singing goes better to accompaniment, and the piano gives considerable steadiness, as you well know. But it's a good trick to sing at least one piece in the *a cappella* method —without accompaniment.

It's a good trick, that is, if done well. And that means: starting on the proper note, and not in between notes, so that you sound "off-key"; and keeping to the key. Your audience will begin to be restless if your voices slide down and start to sing flat.

The more spectacular choruses of this type have a leader with absolute pitch, which means the ability to think of a note and sound that note exactly. He gives the starting note for the next piece in an unobtrusive way, and the gang starts singing, without any visible signal. This goes over big with an audience; although a musical expert I know complains that too much *a cappella* singing is needlessly cheerless!

If your gang can stick to the key, don't be ashamed to start them off with a note from the piano, or you can use a pitch pipe, or an old-fashioned tuning fork. But unless the effect is definitely better by NOT using the piano, better play safe and have the reliable old accompaniment. It's pretty dreary for an audience to have to sit through something that is tedious and doesn't jell properly.

The best way to keep a singing organization together is to stage a show. Appearing behind the footlights is a stimulus to any group.

If your singing club includes both men and women, why not try one of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas? They are

tuneful and bright, and are clean, if that means anything to you. You'll enjoy watching the way Sullivan builds his effects; always the dainty feminine voices are contrasted against the rough, noisy and emphatic voices of the men.

I have heard people say they don't like Gilbert and Sullivan —that these famous light operas are too much alike. That to me is like saying you don't like Schrafft because all he makes is candy. Well, the Gilbert and Sullivan operas are NOT all alike; and while I happen to like *Iolanthe* and *Patience* and *The Pirates of Penzance* best, you are on safe ground if you prefer *Pinafore* and *The Mikado* and even *Ruddigore*, *The Yeoman of the Guard* and *The Gondoliers.*

Bringing your voice out into the open and finding people to sing with you may seem like a lot of work. It will call for practice—assuredly. It will cost some money—true. You may need to hire a voice-trainer or coach. You may have to spend long evenings learning to sing together, and to keep time.

It all sounds like work, does it?

Well, did you ever think of the tremendous amount of work involved in golf, or in going fishing? And as for expense, I know a fisherman who has $400 worth of fishing tackle. And at that, he doesn't eat the fish himself when he catches them.

Singing is a less expensive sport and a more durable sport than most of your outdoor activities. And while these outdoor sports may bring you sociability and joy of competition, can't you get some of that into your music?

After all, the only time you ever really need to sing alone is in your bathtub. At all other times you ought to be able to muster friends to help you whine the long, sweet, painful notes of some pet barbershop chord.

I wonder if the churches are as careful as they might be to help people know and love the old hymns. After all, if you can sing a verse of a hymn to yourself while you're sick abed, you have something tangible from your religion. With music you can sing you carry with you something you can make use of, and do use.

And we have such wonderful hymns!

I remember when I was in college, I would write home at Christmas, "Let's sing 'When Morning Gilds the Skies' and 'Jesus Calls Us O'er the Tumult' in next Sunday's service." And Father would include these, and the congregation would stand up and lift its heads and SING.

But often of late years I have been to church and tried to sing hymns that are strange, and hymns that have no particular tune, and sometimes hymns with no visible merit except that they somehow seemed to express "Forgiveness" or "Consecration" or some other such abstract theme. Grouping hymns in this way may be a help to a lazy preacher—may convince him that he is creating the proper atmosphere for his sermon; but if a hymn can't be sung and if it doesn't prompt the congregation to rise on its hind legs and lift its voices in praise, then what good is it?

I'm all for the old familiar hymns. You'll find some good hymnbooks, and your home ought to have one of its own. You can note the name and address of the publisher and send in your order; or it may be easier to let the pastor sell you one from his supply, if he has any extras.

Go through the hymnbook, page by page, and mark the ones you like. Then any time you have a crowd around the piano you can locate your favorites promptly. You may find some old-timers dressed up with new words—and that's a minor nuisance; but it's not as bad as junking the old tunes in favor of something tuneless and thin.

I recall that "Lead, Kindly Light" was President William McKinley's favorite hymn. There's something wholesome and small-townish in having a president who HAS a favorite hymn; something you can tie to. I hope we can go back to that.

Everybody ought to have a favorite hymn. If you feel self-conscious about the idea, take "Onward, Christian Soldiers"—and then explain promptly that it's a whale of a good marching song, as well as a hymn, and that it was written by the same Sir Arthur Sullivan who composed "The Lost Chord" and who was the musical half of Gilbert and Sullivan who wrote *Pinafore* and *The Mikado* and the rest.

CHAPTER VIII

EVERY MUSIC-LOVER OUGHT TO BE ABLE TO PLAY THE PIANO A LITTLE!

When you once have made up your mind that music is going to become an important part of your life, then you no longer need be afraid of such a complicated instrument as the piano.

Walk up to it bravely. Sit down and spread your hands over its keyboard. You'll want to feel at home with the piano, because regardless of which instrument you play, you should know a little something about the piano.

The piano, you see, is the complete instrument. Most other instruments require some accompaniment. (Of course the organ is a variation of the piano, and generally more cumbersome and expensive. The accordion is a portable organ, but with a technique of its own.) All other instruments—violin, cello, brasses, wood winds, drums, and all the rest—require some sort of accompaniment.

Do you sing? Then you need the piano to pick out the harmony and help you hold your important notes. Do you play a minor instrument in the band or orchestra? Then sitting down to the piano and picking out the other parts will give you a feeling of confidence when you tackle the piece in rehearsal.

If you and the piano are just meeting for the first time, you can afford to do a little experimenting. Sit down at the keyboard. Say, "Hello, piano, you and I are going to be friends!" Assume, in a pleasant, good-natured way, that the piano will do its best to help you produce music—that it holds no mys-

teries it is unwilling to let you solve—that your own native ingenuity would be sufficient, given adequate time, to draw forth a certain kind of music, even without a single lesson from any outsider. Get over any feeling that the piano is going to make fun of you. Far from that, the piano responds to your mood—grows as you grow—develops new personality as you increasingly love it and learn its ways, as does any dog or cat or other household pet.

Strike a note. Any note! Strike another. See if you can find a complete scale—do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, do. If you hit a snag, running into unexpected sharps and flats, try another key, or else figure out which black-note you want to complete the scale. There are twelve different scales you can play—each one starting with one of those white-notes or black-notes as "do." Find a scale that seems natural and friendly to you. You're the best judge here. Some people prefer the black keys; in fact, Irving Berlin, a self-taught pianist and composer, plays entirely in the key of G-flat—six flats. In fact, he has a special piano with a keyboard which shifts with a lever, so that the tune can transpose into any key but he still plays in the one key he is familiar with.

Select your key, and note where it comes, in relation to the other white and black notes, so you can find it again. Sound off an octave, and another—you'll note that the standard piano has seven-and-a-quarter octaves. You can play the scale in octaves, hitting the same note with right and left hands an octave apart; and this will give you a little further feeling of acquaintance and mastery.

You're ready now to start playing. Hit a note and whistle it. Say "Guess I'll play 'Annie Laurie,' or my college alma mater"—or whatever. Whistle it, note by note, and find the key that goes with that note. Don't feel embarrassed if you fumble! After all, you're doing pioneer work.

Make sure you get the time correctly. That makes the tune.

Keep plugging along. And when you have made a little progress, ask some friend to watch you, and to suggest what you do *next*. You might be able to play the treble in a piano duet, while some friend of yours puts in the bass.

The beauty of the piano, and also the difficulty of it, is that you provide the accompaniment at the same time that you create the melody. This means that both hands have to work at the same time. Sometimes they move in opposite directions. It all looks complicated.

But take one step as it comes, and the job becomes simple. Your first procedure is to learn some chords, so that your ear instinctively tells you what accompaniment to play next. The famous old tune "Chop-Sticks" is a good one to start with here, and practically any able-bodied adult you know should be able to pick out the right-hand part while you tackle the left.

For learning simple harmonies and getting some music into your system, I recommend you explore the hymnbook. Here you have all the music of the world, practically speaking, brought within the reach of two fingers of each hand. The time is slow and not difficult, the fingering reliable, and you can hardly go wrong.

You'll note I am not recommending a lot of tedious scales and arpeggios. A certain amount of finger practice is important to make your playing smooth and effective. If you don't know how to shift fingers you'll find you keep running out of fingers! I know a pianist who has played in octaves so much that he makes most of his runs with his little finger. That's one of the muscular fingers, to be sure, and he gets by pretty well; but his playing would be much less ragged if he would improve his fingerwork. And he would get less tired. "I use all my fingers," says a veteran piano teacher to me, "because it doesn't use up my energy so fast." What's more, he plays with supple wrists. And when he has struck a chord, he clings to it, but lets his fingers *slump*. All that saves nervous energy.

I asked this piano teacher, "How soon would you say an average man could learn to play the piano?" He shrugged an answer. "That depends on the man, and on how much time he wants to give to his music, and a lot of other factors," he said. "But I wouldn't emphasize speed. It is NOT *how soon can I play, but how well can I play my first piece?* Let your

reader be like a cook—have a simple menu, but prepare those few dishes excellently well."

As soon as possible, however, you'll want to branch off into some real tunes. I'd suggest something tuneful and not too fast. "Salut d'Amour" by Sir Edward Elgar has spirit and feeling. "Country Gardens" by Percy Grainger is plenty lively.

There are several good selections of piano pieces, sold from 60 cents to about $1 apiece. An *Adult Beginner Piano Album* I own gives two- or three-page excerpts from Dvořák's *New World Symphony*, and from Tschaikowsky's *Fifth* and *Sixth* symphonies and others. An album titled *Tales and Tunes from Grand Opera* gives abbreviated passages from *Aïda*, *Carmen*, *Cavalleria Rusticana*, *Faust*, *Hänsel and Gretel*, *Lohengrin*, and half a dozen others. Another one gives some of the best of Sibelius and other famous Finnish composers. The most comfortable collection of all is an album published by the Willis Music Company of Cincinnati, giving old favorites such as Dvořák's "Songs My Mother Taught Me" and Elgar's "Love's Greeting" and a snatch from Brahms' *First Symphony*, a theme from Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*, an excerpt from Rimsky-Korsakoff's *Scheherazade*, and quite a few others.

Any of these is a good money's worth. The pieces are simple. And it's encouraging to you to know you are playing something that people can recognize—and something your friends will like.

You can grow into more difficult pieces, and by all means do. There is nothing especially intricate about the first movement of the *Moonlight Sonata* except the smoothness and rhythm, for instance. But it makes an impressive addition to any amateur's repertoire. Play it slowly but with a swing, and give it the richness and beauty it deserves.

Don't be too much surprised to find, if you try to play the *Nutcracker Suite*, that what sounded effortless and gay turns out labored and thin. The reason is that much of the effectiveness of this piece lies in the flutes. You can't get the right tone-color with just a piano.

I have a little working agreement with my friend Beethoven. He wrote his famous *Fifth Symphony* for the full orchestra, of course, and despite the efforts of a capable music editor, it still is a large order for a piano. And it runs over forty pages! On a piano it grows tedious and repetitious. None of it is especially bothersome, but parts of it I frankly don't play *well*. So by common consent I abbreviate the piece, Beethoven voting *in absentia*. I feel sure that, if he were here, he would say, "All right, Fred, skip the parts you don't handle so well. There's still enough there to make quite a tune."

Experts will tell you that a piece sounds more lively when played in sharps than it does in flats. I halfway believe this myself. Sharps, they tell me, are more brilliant: "in sharps you get more virginal beauty," a pianist-composer assures me. "The tone is pure. At the same time," he adds, "flats are frequently more mellow."

Be that as it may, most people seem to play flats more readily than sharps. I usually transpose four-sharps—the key of E—to three flats, which is E-flat. Most everybody has one or two favorite keys. I get along passably well in C and in one, two or three sharps; and in one, two, three or four flats. Beyond that I rarely bother to go. The only exception is César Franck's *Symphony in D-Minor* which intrigues me and which is loaded with multiple sharps and double flats. It will take most of another year for me to play this satisfactorily, but it's fun to work at a self-imposed task and feel that every week shows some progress made.

Some fond parents asked my advice recently about piano lessons for their twelve-year-old daughter. The advice was prompt: "Teach her to dance *first*. That will give her rhythm and poise and will help to make her graceful. Dancing is a sociable art; and it should help any boy or girl to make friends and to mix in society.

"Playing the piano might well come later. I should think the little girl could pick that up later on. If she plays the piano well, in addition to having an agreeable manner, that can help

enrich her life. But concentrating too much on the piano right now might make her shy and a recluse—a wallflower instead of a social success."

Being able to entertain oneself at the piano is a thrifty idea, of course. It is often important for *grown men and women* to be able to cheer themselves up. A man or woman may work into a position of leadership and of community usefulness, and through music reach a wider audience than would otherwise be possible. I'm all for people learning to play the piano—but I wouldn't make a flat-chested child spend hours in lonely practice when he or she might better be outdoors, playing games with the other children.

This probably is incomplete advice; in fact, I am called to account for it by a professional musician who has generously read this manuscript. "You are inconsistent," says this musician. "A good teacher makes even piano playing a sociable and friendly thing, a way of meeting and knowing others with similar interests. I can refer you to piano teachers who teach children to play parts requiring four hands, and even eight hands, so that increasingly the child finds piano playing a sociable affair. And furthermore, good piano teaching improves posture, because the good music teacher looks first into that." Well, I guess much depends on your finding a *good* music teacher.

Fortunately, more and more piano teachers are proving successful in teaching practically anybody, at whatever age, to play competently. One piano teacher boasts he has taught men of fifty and over to play well. "Three factors only are important," he says. "Those factors are: equipment, application, and common sense."

If you think you can't play the piano, maybe you suffered under the style of teaching they used years ago, when some of us were kids.

I remember one lady teacher who spent endless hours trying to persuade me to hold my fingers in the shape of a partly opened rose. She even made me play groups of three notes and sing, "See the pretty rose, See the pretty rose, See the PRETTY rose." I practiced scales, and played some dull pieces, written

practically without tunes. But we never got around to playing *music*. Nor were the teachers of my boyhood successful in inspiring me with any ambition to practice.

Today's piano teachers have a better method, I understand.

I'd advise any beginner to take a few lessons, if only to get acquainted with the proper technique, and save time wasted in doing simple things the wrong way, and the difficult way. Moreover, you get more fun out of playing if you play well enough so as to entertain and please others.

Oscar Smith, music editor of the Akron *Beacon-Journal*, calls me to account here for advising any amateur to sing or play entirely for his own pleasure, rather than follow any arbitrary rules.

"I admit that singing or playing an instrument assists in giving the performer mental, spiritual and physical health," he writes. "But why not urge amateurs to make their music as agreeable to the human ear as possible, including their own; not hunt for short cuts to learning how to play the piano or the trombone. Don't you think there is danger of making mediocrity a virtue, merely because the amateur musician happens to be playing or singing for the fun of it?

"Personally, I think the pianist who sweats over scales long months before he is given pieces to play becomes a better pianist than the one who can't wait to get started on 'The Maiden's Prayer' or Chaminade's 'Scarf Dance,'" he goes on. "And why should practicing scales make him lose his amateur standing?"

My answer is that it is not my wish to discourage any beginner by holding up such lofty standards that he is discouraged from making a start. If you sing and play for your own amusement only, go ahead and sing through your nose, if that's the only way you as yet know how to sing. Later on your own self-respect will cause you to hunt out someone who can teach you to place your voice properly.

As for mediocrity, I'm against it. Whenever I attend a Rotary Club meeting and hear some veteran piano player sound off with one verse of "America," and play it poorly, I wonder why anybody who habitually plays in public like that

shouldn't take the time to learn how to play the piece right. If a man can play at all, he needs only patience to learn to play reasonably well.

So take a few piano lessons and get started properly. Of course, if you happen to be a genius you won't need lessons.

I have seen books on how to play the piano, and even books on how to play the piano by ear. The latter books usually work up a system of chords by numbers, and you learn to think of numbers rather than read written notes. Such a system may work; but if you're smart enough to read figures, you can read notes. Why invent a new system?

For that matter, if you're enough of a genius to learn to play-the-piano-by-ear just by reading somebody else's book, you're probably smart enough to work out your own system.

A bandmaster told me the other day that the piano is really a low-grade instrument; a percussion instrument, forsooth, ranking somewhere with the drums. You don't have to tune it—you just get your fingers in the right place and press down, he explains.

A church organist and a piano teacher of my acquaintance argues to the contrary. "A piano does indeed differ from a violin, where the bow in the player's hand and the fingers on the strings actually produce the music," he says. "And it is true that considerable mechanism has been set up between the player of the piano and the strings. But perhaps for that very reason playing the piano calls for more skill. A piano or an organ is so largely a mechanical instrument that, to get your own expression out of it, calls for considerable application on the player's part."

Percussion instrument or not, a piano is capable of endless variety. A friend wrote me recently: "We were invited out last night to a friend's house where the main entertainment was a piano concert by a young fellow. I rather hesitated to go, but instead of its being a dry, uninteresting recital, it really turned out to be quite an affair. This fellow was not only a very clever pianist, but also quite a comedian, *à la* Alec Templeton. I am afraid that this type of music has more appeal to me than Rachmaninoff."

But if this friend had been with me in Washington, D. C., the night I tried to buy even standing room at a Rachmaninoff recital, and was turned away, he would have found that plenty of people enjoy even piano recitals. And without disparaging Alec Templeton's obvious ability, I wish at times his programs over the radio were not quite so cheap. Good taste in music can grow, as in other things.

If you can play the piano by your own system, you can probably also learn to play by note. Oh yes, it may take a little time. I find I have to stop and count off the notes above the upper clef or below lower G in the bass clef; but that's a detail. Even that grows easier with repeated playing.

Playing by note is an entirely different experience. I used to play chiefly by ear, which is thrifty—and I wasn't loaded down with music. But when no one was around to ask for any favorite pieces and to sing in my ear, I didn't play. Playing alone made me feel self-conscious. But for the last year I've been buying piano scores. I find I *like* playing by note. Playing Beethoven from the music makes me feel I actually share Beethoven's friendship. Playing is not a lonely affair, but is companionable. I play along and come to a chord where, by adding a note, the composer has produced an effect I couldn't have guessed at alone. That gives me the thrill of sharing a music adventure with the man who wrote the piece. It's as if the composer came into the room.

My collection of piano selections is not large, because I do not crave endless variety. Buy a new one every six months and learn to play it fairly well, is my system. And the pieces mean so much more to me, when I decipher them on my own keyboard, than when I hear them over the radio or through a phonograph. I am continually amazed at the brilliance and patience of the men who composed these masterpieces we buy so conveniently.

Playing the piano in fact brings the best of the past to help encourage you and me to face the future.

If you take piano lessons, make sure not to have any kibit-

zers in the studio with you. A piano teacher explains this as follows: "I respect my pupils enough that I never let anybody in here when I'm giving a lesson. In that way I can talk heart to heart, without embarrassment. But if a member of the family sits in a corner, reading a book, that would put my pupil under constraint."

This of course is especially important for beginners, because if the music teacher should criticize you in front of others, it might hurt your feelings and discourage you from further trying. Advanced pupils may ask for just the opposite technique. In fact, a singing teacher tells me he *prefers* to have a friend listen in while a pupil takes a singing lesson. It helps discourage self-consciousness, he finds. "You'll note that my studio has no waiting room," he says. "If a pupil arrives early for a lesson I like him to come in and watch someone else sing, and then wait over for the start of the lesson that follows his."

Every teacher probably has his own system. I mention this merely to show that in musical matters, as in other walks of life, experts do not always agree.

Playing the piano accompaniment for a soloist is a job all in itself. You need to be doubly sure of your time, because you can't lean on the soloist—he'll be dragging back, building his effects. Accompanists need a nerveless physique, something like a newsphotographer. If anybody ropes you in to play the accompaniment for "Less than the dust beneath thy chariot wheels" or "Mandalay" or "The Palms," save yourself time and trouble—merely break a leg, or get called away on a sudden business trip. Nobody knows you well enough to ask a favor like that. I'd rather sit up all night with a sick dog than play for anyone to sing a solo in public again.

Playing the hymns in church is quite a different matter. I can handle that kind of fingerwork comfortably.

Once you learn to play the piano accurately you can add some of the elements of showmanship, if they seem important to you. Personally, it always seems to me that too much stunt stuff in playing detracts from the enjoyment—and that fre-

quently an excess of frills and trick endings is used to disguise an actual lack of musical ability. But there are those who like that sort of thing. If you do, get acquainted with the piano players of various traveling dance orchestras that visit your town, and ask them how they get their effects. Maybe if you buy a homesick pianist a couple of beers or even take him home for a home-cooked supper he'll be glad to hand on to you any ingenious short cuts he may have devised.

You'll find public school teachers and many church organists are lonely and unappreciated and hence respond to any friendly approach. You might do a lot worse than to take some lessons from a church organist—on a piano, of course. Perhaps you can swap some accomplishment of your own for the lessons the musician will give you. Perhaps you have a woodworking shop in your basement and can help a pianist or organist make a picture frame or hanging shelf or other simple gimcrack, for even artists need some hobby far removed from their everyday walk of life. Or perhaps you know some foreign language and can trade lessons in Spanish for lessons in the fugue. Or take him out and teach him to roller-skate!

Whatever your personal situation, try to learn what you want to know about music from living people, rather than from books. The books are important, to be sure; and you'll find no end of good ones. But right now you want to know just enough of the mechanics of music so you can stay with the gang. You just want enough of the vocabulary so you can ask a question without getting laughed at.

So hunt up your local piano experts and ask questions. When a musician says anything, pay him the compliment of listening intently, and of adding a remark that indicates interest. You'll be surprised how grateful people are for a chance to talk to a good listener.

When you play the piano try to save yourself needless muscular effort. You don't need to play from the shoulders. You're playing with your fingers, not your elbows. If you can play an inch above the keyboard, that's better than lifting your hands half a foot and swinging your arms.

Too much atmosphere may weary your audience. I like the

kind of player who can sit down and PLAY. I remember one evening when a music-loving lady called on my wife and myself with an even more music-loving visitor, also a lady. The visitor would play. We showed her our piano and our bench. But, oh dear, that was too high for her. And a chair was too low. We finally boosted her up with atlases and encyclopedias, but by that time we didn't much care whether she played or not. She could play very well, it turned out, but not well enough to pay for all that trouble.

I recall an evening, thirty years ago, when a famous church organist played one Sunday evening in a little out-of-the-way church in Chicago. All he had to play on was a wheezy old parlor organ. I expected him to show some temperament—to make us all feel that he was above playing on that shabby sort of instrument, but would do it this once, as a favor. He did no such thing. He just went ahead and played—and the wheezy old parlor organ responded gloriously.

It seems to me that temperament is a pretext of the lazy and incompetent. If you're really good, you can afford to dispense with temperament.

CHAPTER IX

HOW TO PLAY BY EAR

Here's an odd thing. When you sing, or when you whistle, you don't care *what* key you're in. You just know you want a certain note, and presto, there it is!

Perhaps your mind thinks, more or less consciously, of the scale: "do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, do."

Thus, the favorite old hymn, "My Faith Looks Up to Thee" becomes "do-mi-sol-sol-fa-mi." The relation between the notes is the same, regardless of the key you sing in. The hymn "Shall We Gather at the River" is equally simple: "mi-mi-mi-re-mi-fa-sol-mi."

Why not adapt this to your playing, regardless of *what* instrument you play? It's mighty handy, you know, to be able to pick up a tune and play it by ear! Handy too to be able to transpose it, to move it up or down a few notes so as to accommodate whatever crowd you are playing for. For instance, the waltz from *The Chocolate Soldier* is written in E-flat, but goes better in C, which is a simple transposition. For male voices the chorus can be sung even better when played in A-flat.

Let's divide this subject into two phases: first, playing a tune by ear where you don't see the sheet music; second, playing something you already know but transposing it into a different key. The two phases are much alike, but let's start by playing a piece in ANY key first. You can select whatever key seems natural and easy for you. Make yourself familiar enough with it so you don't have to think what note comes next. Your fingers should know the notes as readily as your eyes and ears

interpret the word C-A-T-cat, or the figures 2-times-2-equals-4.

You can start playing by ear right now, and practice anywhere—in a crowded trolley or subway train, or while walking down the street. What you need to do first is to whistle or hum the tune. *Get the melody clearly in mind.* Get the rhythm, too. That is important.

Follow the tune relentlessly. If it changes keys, as so many modern pieces do, keep whistling around until you discover where the tune goes to! Thus, in the familiar piece, "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," the third strain goes skylarking. What happens? You don't need to be baffled if you break down the melody into a simple do-re-mi-fa-sol-la-ti-do. Why, *do* in the original melody becomes *mi* in this brief, inserted melody. Then if you pick it out on the keyboard by ear, as I did, you will probably pitch it in G and let it shift into E-flat—instead of doing as Mr. Kern did, which was to start it in three-flats and let it end in seven-flats, which is a key that few of us know how to play.

Incidentally, "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" can also be played nicely in the key of D, which is two-sharps, and then change into B-flat, which is two-flats. What you do, you will note, is to *add four flats* when you shift keys. Adding a flat is equivalent to knocking off a sharp. And I trust I am not being pedantic.

You should of course have a reasonable number of chords for the bass. I claim you can get all the harmony in the world out of the old family hymnbook, and can master these grand old chords with only two fingers on each hand. Once you load your subconscious mind with the correct harmony for any given note, you instinctively can find it on the piano. In fact, it is a simple matter to hear a tune, whistle it over to yourself, and then sit down and play it through, with both hands, the first time you ever tackle it.

There are dozens and hundreds of popular tunes we hear and know, but for which we seldom see the sheet music. Buying music is a costly affair, and we may as well limit our

purchases to pieces we intend to treasure and keep. That's where being able to pick a tune out of thin air is an advantage.

How many popular tunes are there that an average adult is familiar with? Nobody knows. One Thursday evening a group of local music-lovers met haphazardly at a deserted country club. After dinner someone started playing the piano, and the rest of us sang. By common consent we tried to "stick" the piano player. Did he know "Mister Dooley"? He did. Did he know "Pick a lemon in the garden of love"? and "Bedelia"? And "The umpire is an unhappy man"? He knew all these, and more. It's amazing, the number of pieces you know, when someone reminds you of them.

The radio brings you week after week new pieces, many of them catchy, many of them worth adding to your repertoire. Here is a game costing nothing to enter—no box tops to tear off and mail.—nothing to buy. Just form the habit of remembering some of the current popular songs, week after week. If they elude you, keep a pad of scored sheets handy and write down enough of a new theme so as to capture it—and add the title. There are lots of worthwhile tunes on the radio every day. Why not learn to play them?

Playing the piano by ear has had a dollars and cents value to me, in training my memory. I can interview a man without taking notes, and go back and reconstruct the whole story, often in the man's actual words. It is my belief that no skill or any training in thoroughness is ever wasted.

Oddly enough, when I pick a tune out of thin air, I play it only approximately perhaps, but I play it all, and easily. But when I play a piece by note, and then try to play that same piece from memory, I falter. Remembering becomes a chore then, not a pastime. I seem to become a slave to the printed notes.

I think it's because I don't *hear* a piece completely when I read the notes. Perhaps I work too hard! It's a job to read the music accurately and make the fingers of both hands respond

as they should. But when I learn the piece from an orchestra or from the radio, I hear it complete. Playing then is simple.

I don't know why it is, but it's almost harder to remember a piece when I have been playing it from the notes than when I just pick it up from the air and put it together in my own way.

Playing by ear permits you to put a piece in any key that comes natural to you, regardless of the dictates of the composer. Occasionally you will happen to hit the actual key the piece was written in; indeed, you come to believe there is always an "inevitable" key in which most pieces sound better than they do in others. But again, practically all the successful concert songs are made available in several keys, for high or low voices, and they sound well, wherever played. *Which* key you play in depends on two things: your own ease, and the range of your friends' voices. It is handy to be able to drop down a few notes to accommodate men's voices, because most popular pieces are pitched too high for average males to sing with comfort.

They're teaching today's children how to transpose, and to do it naturally. It's a matter of intervals. If you start at *do* and move up two notes, to *mi*, it's the same in any key you play in. That's the way they teach the children. The trick seems to be not to let anybody feel that transposing is difficult. The children grow into it as a matter of course.

If you have children, incidentally, you might well learn music along with them. Surely a hobby can have no finer purpose than to draw parent and child closer together in a fine and permanent enthusiasm. If you have no children; if perhaps you are even unmarried or widowed, you need music all the more. I know a childless widower who has recently taken up the piano, and who finds that music does much to satisfy a lonely life.

You can do a lot of practicing at odd times. Sometimes you school your ear. Sometimes you school your memory.

A young sailor at the Naval Training Station at Newport showed me recently how he had stretched a very small hand to reach ten notes. He merely pressed thumb and little finger

against the edge of a table and pushed, stretching the tendons and joints. This, however, I am told, is dangerous business. Wasn't it Robert Schumann who permanently crippled himself by trying to strengthen the inefficient fourth finger with a pulley-weight and a little rope harness? What happened was that his whole left hand became paralyzed in time and caused Schumann no little trouble.

But practicing scales on a table-top is safe, and is convenient for any of us. It calls for nothing but patience.

A former Army bandmaster tells me he used to practice the fingering for a cornet, when he played cornet, by "borrowed fingering"—by practicing against the outside seam of his right trouser leg as he walked down the street. He has trained his fingers so he can place all five finger tips on a table and raise and lower any pair of fingers briskly at will.

There probably are a lot of little quirks you can work out for yourself in music. If anyone attempted to spell them out to you and say "Do this and do that before you are a musician," the assignment would sound like work. And music need not be work to you. It can and should be an entertaining spare-time hobby, and it is something you can carry with you. How much and in what way you utilize your dull, slack hours to develop yourself musically rests with yourself. Sufficient to say that, just as many composers have done much of their composing without having a piano at hand, you can do considerable "practicing" in your mind, even when you walk down the street.

One of the beauties of music, in fact, is that you can carry it with you. You can whistle to keep up your courage—although they won't let you whistle in the Navy, and most of us outgrow the habit of whistling in public, for other reasons. But you can enjoy music personally and privately, without anyone being the wiser.

A music-loving friend of mine had to undergo a serious operation. While waiting for the anesthetist to apply the ether-cone and then while taking those first deep, labored breaths, she ran through César Franck's *Symphony in D-Minor* in her head. That helped her take the ether more

calmly. There was only one ill effect: ever since, when she hears that symphony she smells ether!

Most of us have a desire to do some exploring. Most men have some of the instincts of a detective. But modern life has been too civilized; the exploring has all been done for us; our modern life is departmentalized, and we live in our little rut, robbed of any spirit of adventure.

It's all too bad.

But in music we can tinker and explore. We hear a tune, and it appeals to us. Very well, let's dig it out! There is no one to satisfy but yourself. You alone make the rules.

The greatest thing our modern life takes from us is a feeling of adventure. Even a hobby can become too thoroughly routine—and I hope you guard against that. Let music as your hobby bring you companionship and lead you into new paths of activity, but don't let it stultify your ambition through the lack of any local supporters. Be yourself, for whatever God gave you the opportunity to be.

It may just be, for instance, that once you start thinking in music, you will begin to compose music of your own. Fine! Keep at it!

Francesco B. DeLeone, former American composer and piano teacher, told me his mother used to sing to him, long before he could read music, and say, "Frank, I want you to pick out the chords and play as I sing." The boy did. That started him composing. He learned to think in music, as a student of languages learns in time to think in whatever foreign language he adopts and makes use of.

Your best move in composing might be to set to music any little poem that especially appeals to you. Millions more people have heard the song "Trees" than ever read Joyce Kilmer's poem. Plenty of people draw strength and reverence from the musical version of "The Lord's Prayer." You might do well with any piece of poetry that moves you. The mood need not be sad. There are gay bits of verse, and music can be gay, too. Start with any piece of poetry that seems to speak your language.

If you happen to be poet as well as musician, so much the

better. Keep the thought simple, however. A song is no place for you to voice your enthusiasm for the single tax, or express your faith in the brotherhood of man, or try to clarify the binomial theorem. Better write a simple love song; or describe an amusing little episode; or perhaps write a college song.

Look at Irving Berlin, a little-tutored genius who writes his own verses for his own tunes. There's a trick to it, which I once heard Sigmund Spaeth explain as follows: "Berlin makes frequent use of the song's title. You start to sing 'All alone, by the telephone,' skip a line or two, and come in strong again on the 'All alone.' " Berlin's own explanation of his art is that he keeps things simple.

When would-be writers start trying to produce short stories, the advice often is, "Take any short story you especially enjoy and *copy it off on your own typewriter*. See how it looks and how it reads in manuscript form. Compare it with your own fiction efforts, typed with those same fingers. By copying off the story, word by word, you'll absorb something of the author's technique. You'll see how he thinks." This advice might be applied to the composing of music.

Writing music is a laborious affair, but not necessarily beyond your powers. You can buy scored sheets at any music store. The first step is to select your key and draw up your clef. Then write down your theme before you lose it! Get the theme right, and if you have any words put them in.

Jack Owens, radio's cruising crooner, writes about one new song a week. Many of them never get to first base, but he averages up nicely on those that do sell. Jack's method is to get a title and start with that. One piece was named after a girl named Sylvia whom he met in a West Coast aircraft factory during World War II. He writes his words, and marks the places where he thinks the music should go up, or down, or linger on a fond note. The composer does the rest.

You probably will enjoy writing your own accompaniment, although it's a safe bet that if any music publisher should buy one of your songs he probably would have his own arrangers rebuild your accompaniment. That's an art in itself. Some of the big shots don't attempt to write down their music at all, preferring to play it into a phonograph or

play it to a keen-eared arranger who jots down the theme.

One little caution: If your homemade musical composition is intended to be sung, keep it within the range of one octave.

How about composing songs for profit? This is a competitive field, and a dilettante hasn't much chance. Popular songs run in cycles, and you almost have to be a native of Tin-Pan Alley to know what the current trend or fad is. Furthermore, the difference between your homemade song or mine, and a finished song by Jerome Kern or some other expert, is about the same distance as between a bride's first batch of biscuits and a $5 dinner at the Waldorf.

I wish I could give any embryo composer the name of some publishing firm that would welcome his wares and make him instantly wealthy. The truth is that, as elsewhere, nothing succeeds like success. The public likes to buy sure-fire hits, from known repeaters. So if you have a song in your system, I'd say get it published somehow, and expect to make little or nothing on it. At least you'll gain experience. And maybe your second, or third, or tenth tune will be a hit.

Will we ever run out of original tunes? That is a worry. However, it has been estimated that there are over five hundred million possible vocal melodies within the range of a single octave. And if you bring in repetition, and various rhythms, and tone color and orchestration, it should be possible to go on composing original music practically endlessly.

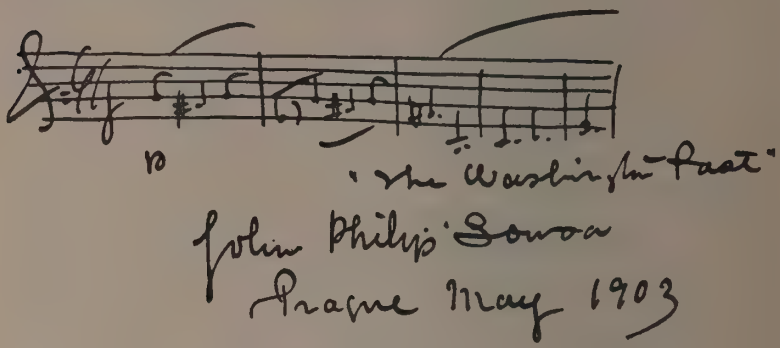
Of course music sometimes unconsciously borrows a musical phrase here and there from some ancient composer, dead and gone. Or perhaps the borrowing is not quite so accidental. There are those who can tell you where and how even such originators as Wagner borrowed lavishly. The main thing is to put your own flavor on your finished product, so that you at least create an entity, even if not every note is original.

The Library of Congress has a sizable collection of original music manuscripts. I recommend you spend a day there on your next visit to Washington, following not only your own native bent but also reaching out for new adventures in music.

One of the most interesting bits of music I found there was

a brief theme in the hand of John Philip Sousa. Either he thought up these opening bars of a new march while on a vacation trip abroad; or, more likely, he dashed this off as an autographed souvenir for a friend he met in Europe.

It's just a snatch, but it gives you the theme, the key, and the time—and does it all quickly. Here it is:



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You see how simply music can be put on paper. If you're at a band concert, or a new musical show, or a symphony recital, and you hear a theme you want to remember, you can draw the five bars quickly—and sketch in the theme. To save time, I usually use the key of E-flat when jotting down a theme like this, possibly because then a full octave falls within the upper clef. It takes only a minutes to record a theme in this way. Later on, with this actual start to refresh your mind, you can dig out the rest while waiting for an elevator, or riding in a bus. And when you get hold of a piano, a day or two later, perhaps after a bridge game at a friend's house, presto! you can play the hit tune all the way through. Life has few triumphs so satisfying.

It may be worth while adding here that if you have the leisure to embark upon music composing in any large way, you can meet with congenial friends and perhaps find tangible encouragement by writing to or visiting the MacDowell Colony, at Peterboro, New Hampshire.

CHAPTER X

LET'S MAINTAIN OUR AMATEUR POINT OF VIEW

Recently I interviewed the medical superintendent of a school for feeble-minded children. I found a cheering story. Convinced that many morons can be cured and lifted into being useful citizens, the trained staff of this school spends considerable time getting inside a child's wounded shell and convincing the youngster that he or she is not being picked on. The doctors and psychiatrists spend weeks getting a child adjusted socially, and then the youngsters shoot ahead in their studies. Many go back to school as normal pupils. Others, the children with brain injuries dating from birth, can frequently be brought to the level of third or fourth grade.

"Third grade," the doctor continued. "That's all a person needs to make a living."

I thought of the incredible number of things that we pride ourselves on knowing, none of which we actually NEED to know. *The child is father to the man. Arma virumque cano. The flowers that bloom in the spring, tra-la. Oh, that I were a glove upon that hand. To be, or not to be: that is the question.* And so on, ad infinitum; all beautiful, but all needless in the grim task of earning a living, at least in the everyday walks of trade.

We spend a lifetime learning the contents of many books, and when we have learned them, we still face the important job of finding out how to live with other people. "Get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding," counsels the Proverbs. Merely learning is not the thing, but rather putting what we know in such shape that it is of some use.

I'm interested just now in *how little* we need to know to

start. And in that I realize you may need special encouragement; for the intellectual circles do not deal kindly with superficial learning, or with the dilettante. "Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring," Alexander Pope advised.

But our modern life crowds us with so many new experiences that we need to rely on someone else to handle most of the details. Any of us can make use of an alarm clock, but not since the age of eleven have I had the courage to try to "fix" one. Most of us can drive a car; but can you recite the firing-order of the cylinders under the car's hood? Many of us take pictures, and perhaps we pride ourselves on knowing what f.6.3 means; but few of us understand the physics of light, or have the vaguest appreciation of the chemistry involved in manufacturing and processing the film we use so handily.

I'm not even sure it pays to know too much. Certainly not if that added wisdom robs you of the amateur's enjoyment. It's all right to taste the Pierian spring, but you don't have to fall into it and drown! All of us know "experts" who lose sight of the enjoyment of the art in their absolute worship of some arbitrary rules.

Let's maintain our amateur standing, you and I. Let's enjoy music, and let's even learn a little more about it, as we go along. But let's not strive to be too learned, all at once! Experts can be such tedious people!

Even if you happen to know a great deal about music, don't be snobbish and superior toward those who know less. Have patience with those whose tastes are simple. It's still important to help more people learn to take the first early steps in music.

I don't want to be superficial in the sense of being incomplete, and I certainly do not want to be inaccurate. But I do want to be honest within my field. Let's take the first steps toward a larger appreciation of music. And let no one frighten you into thinking the way is dark and long, and that you are not privileged to take the trip.

A hobby book, after all, should be suggestive and stimulating and friendly but should exhaust neither subject nor reader.

Music is both a science and an art. As a science it has defi-

nite rules and formulae, and touches close upon the province of physics. Just a sample: the standard tuning fork has 440 vibrations to the second. That gives you the tone of A above middle C, or the A on your violin.

You go on from there into mathematical formulae if you care to. It's as important to some types of musicians—piano-tuners, perhaps—as a knowledge of the human skeleton is to a doctor. But when you and I want to enjoy a beautiful piece of music we aren't concerned with the skeleton, any more than when we enjoy seeing a beautiful woman we want an X-ray of her tibia.

We don't have to understand very much about music, in order to like it. We just have to appreciate that music is a science with definite rules, and be respectful of the fact that there ARE rules.

"The rest of the world has borrowed our word 'harmony,' " says Lillian Baldwin. "When you think how many of our technical terms other people HAVE borrowed, it shows you what a thoroughly human science we have!"

Let's look further into this human science. Forget the books; forget the years that people study to become musicians; forget how much there may be that some day you'll want to delve into. Start where you now are. You need nothing more than normal intelligence to enjoy good music. Trust to your musical tastes to grow—but don't deprive yourself of anything good while the growing is taking place.

Take a frank look at the vocabulary of music. It's Italian.

The Italians developed our early music and did a lot for it. But they have no monopoly on music. It may be as satisfactory as anything to have the musical terms written in Italian—after all, they need to be in some one language! But there's no reason you should be afraid of these foreign-looking terms.

That Italian breaks down very easily. Thus a young friend of mine says he thinks of "*Il Trovatore*, by Giuseppe Verdi" as "*The Street-Singer*, by Joe Green."

You know of course that "p" stands for "piano" which is Italian for "soft," and that "f" means "forte" which means "loud." The other expression marks used in music are equally

simple, as you grow to use them. You can find most of them in any desk dictionary. And you can find all the usual ones, like *pizzicato*, and a good many more in any musical encyclopedia at your local library.

The East Indian scale, according to Deems Taylor, has sixty-three notes. The Scotch bagpipe uses a five-note scale or the pentatonic scale. We use a seven-note, or diatonic scale (eight notes with the octave). When you include the sharps and flats you have the twelve-note or chromatic scale.

A lot of musicians make life difficult for any unpracticed listener by using stock phrases such as "a diminished seventh," "an augmented fifth," and so on. That probably is all right if you were brought up that way, but it sort of freezes out the amateur. But the phraseology need not deter you for long. A "fifth" is an interval of five notes, *including the note you start with*. Thus, a violin is tuned in fifths—G, D, A and E. A "third" is a jump of three notes, again including the note you start with; like this: do, re, mi.

It may be interesting to know that the names of our scale developed about A. D. 1000. A monk named Guido gets credit for either naming them or writing a little verse which made the names easy to remember (authorities are divided in their opinion). The verse ran as follows, in Latin of course:

UT queant laxis
REsonare fibris
MIra gestorum
FAmuli tuorum
SOLve polluti
LAbii reatum
Sancte Joannes (or SI)

This little verse was sung, or chanted, to the rising notes of the scale. Later "UT" was changed to "DO" (pronounced dough) although the French still call it "UT."

There are books—and I leave you to discover them—that trace the history of music in connection with other human progress and developments. Mozart, for instance, wrote his

brittle, crackling pieces for the crisp, tinny instrument of the day which plucked the keys rather than striking them, as the piano does. Our modern piano was just then a-borning, and in fact, stronger and more flexible pianos were hurried into production to keep up with Mozart's demands.

If a piece of music seems to you to be covered with frills, check back, and you'll probably find it came along with the baroque period of architecture, since art always mirrors life.

This merely means that if you and I like certain types of music, we probably would have liked other qualities of the men who wrote those pieces. And we would have liked the general characteristics of the times that our favorite composers lived in.

Don't feel you have to make a study of this; but then again, if you look on a piece of music as the living soul of a living man, it may help you understand and enjoy that piece if you find out a little something about his family background, the kind of life he lived, and the things he had to contend with. Any encyclopedia will give you useful information about any of your favorite composers—and gladly.

Is it important to be able to recognize this and that fragment of a symphony at a moment's notice?

No. Some pieces you will know as readily as you recognize "the Star-Spangled Banner." Others you will find familiar but won't be sure whether the piece is by Beethoven or Brahms, Bizet or Ravel; indeed, it may not seem to matter.

The radio quiz programs have popularized a freak type of memory which can recite whole pages of the World Almanac on demand, and reconstruct a whole aria from a handful of notes. All of us know a good many pieces, and our acquaintance grows as we use it. But don't be too worshipful of these freak minds you hear on the radio. John Kieran can be a mental wizard and still be human, and F. P. A. can be knowing and still be good fun; but you'll hear some other paragons of learning who would bore you in brief time.

Of course we enjoy music, just as we enjoy painting, or a garden, or a lovely landscape in proportion to our powers of

artistic appreciation. We take away from a concert the same kind of coin we carry to it.

Is it necessary, you may ask, to have music suggest actual pictures to you, while you are listening to it? To feel you enjoy music, must you be able to describe your feelings in words? I do not think so.

I disparage all attempts to describe any emotional experience, most of all listening to music, in words. Once for a college theme I tried to describe Johann Strauss's famous waltz, "The Blue Danube." The English professor was polite, but he told me—and I believed him—that it's difficult to explain an emotional experience in cold type. A piece of music may mean a lot to you, but getting that identical feeling across to a fellow listener may prove a chore.

And after all, there's something arbitrary about trying to make someone else obtain exactly the same thrill from a piece of music that you get. Why can't your friends listen and derive their enjoyment in their own way?

As for music telling a story, or describing a scene, I understand that some composers, notably Beethoven, always worked from a picture, though he never titled the piece. If a piece of music recalls a certain scene to you, you're safe as long as you don't try to impose your interpretation on another. Some people are eye-minded and like to *see* as well as *hear*.

Some schools encourage tiny children to think of music in pictures, and to "paint" with their gay crayons the pictures they see. A certain piece of music may suggest a feeling of peace, such as a calm cow nibbling grass on a sunny hillside. Very well, let the child paint the hillside and title it! There is no harm in this, and it probably helps tie together several arts in the child's mind, showing him that if he feels deeply he can express his soul through brush or through song, or even through poetry or the dance.

Music doesn't often suggest a story to me. When I sat through *Fantasia*, the Walt Disney-Deems Taylor-Stokowski trifle, I felt that here was picture-making carried to complete absurdity. If music suggests a conglomeration of activity and bright colors like that to some people, I'm glad I have a more

peaceful type of imagination. And why must you think of anything but the music, while you listen? It's as if eating a cream-puff or enjoying a delicious dish of ice cream gave you a delirious day-dream. Which may be all right for some folks, but no one you tell your dreams to is likely to care.

But there I realize I am being snobbish myself, and am trying to enforce a personal opinion, and a not-too-sympathetic opinion, upon someone else. Perhaps the film was better than I thought! Its only fault may have been, indeed, that it was oversold to me, so that I expected miracles.

You see and hear only what you are capable of digesting. The city of Munich to some *nouveau riche* friends of ours, following an exciting trip to Europe a few years ago, was not a city of museums but the place where they saw a couple of lively night clubs. Another city was remembered chiefly because of an unusual sauce that came with the fish.

In any experience you take yourself along.

So when you sit down to enjoy a symphony, you may be excused if you read your own story, your own pattern, into what is being played.

For instance, in some tunes it seems to me the composer swings his initial theme around and around until he develops momentum enough to go forward with it. I think of a man swinging a rope and slowly building up his momentum, and the music strikes me the same way.

Many pieces seem to me to be similar to things in literature. Certain pieces are strongly affirmative. This includes most of the hymns, and such other things as Sousa's marches. Here there is no double talk, no innuendo, no uncertainty, nothing you can easily miss. The piece starts at A-B-C, and keeps on going through to X-Y-Z. That is a simple and satisfying kind of music.

Other pieces start, I say to myself, in the subjunctive. Or start with a long and involved "if" clause. They wander around considerably in an artificial situation that is self-invited, and eventually perhaps come back to the affirmative. Obviously the affirmative pieces are written in the major mood, while the ones that seem inconclusive are in the minor.

Some pieces I don't see any pattern in at all, or any sense in playing. They fill no want in my life. I can sit through them, but they fall in the same class as pink cake-frosting—a nuisance, rather than an achievement. However, because modern society is based on our being polite to people and things that frankly bore us, so you manage to sit through music which doesn't entirely speak your language or mine.

Coming back to my original thesis, which is that nobody has the right to awe you with his superior acquaintance with the heights and the deepness of music, you might try the experiment of asking an occasional question yourself—just to find out how much other people really do know.

For instance, a friend has been startling his musical acquaintances by asking "Why is it that the same piece sounds different, when played in different keys?"

He asked a piano-tuner, who couldn't answer, other than to say that tuning a piano is a traditional affair and that all tuners start with certain notes and from those get certain other notes correct, and then bunch their errors all in one part of the scale.

A couple of other musicians suggested that possibly a difference in fingering, or the added leverage that comes from placing the finger tips far back upon the black keys, might make a difference.

It seems to me that Deems Taylor explains this in one of his books. Our scale is a compromise, he says, between what should be and what must be. So that we can shift from one key to another and find approximately the same intervals between notes in any key, we purposely mis-tune the piano. Thus when we say it is "in tune" it is really OUT OF TUNE. And if this isn't entirely clear, pause and think that nearly all of the science of music has developed within the last 300 years, and that there probably are still many things about music that nobody as yet fully understands.

CHAPTER XI

HOW TO GET MORE FUN OUT OF LISTENING

People who like everything and everybody are lovely, in theory; but for the long pull you find them colorless and insipid. They are too complacent to have much backbone. You suspect they have no real standards.

A reasonable amount of tolerance is wonderful, but too much is like more cream than coffee in your cup—just pap for infants.

Don't pretend you like all music. Why should you? You don't like all of Shakespeare, or Browning, or Keats, do you? (Have you read ANY of those gentlemen LATELY, by the way?) You don't like all kinds of food equally well, do you? There is much unevenness in any product, be it culinary, or literary, or musical.

I suggest we discuss this matter in an honest and thoroughly masculine way, being frank about our preferences and honest about our prejudices. I heard a little story, which suggests that, to enjoy music, you have to get your teeth in it somewhere, and it doesn't matter too much where you begin.

It seems a wealthy Westerner was traveling in an airplane. Across the aisle was a well-known musician. The Westerner was talkative. He volunteered, out of a clear sky, that probably a lot of people paid good money to hear music, but that as far as *he* was concerned, he had heard it all, and he didn't care much for it.

The musician didn't ruffle a feather. He merely asked, "Is there any part of any composition that you *do* like?"

The man was surprised at this new attack. Most musicians had picked up the gauntlet and waged a stiff argument. Here

was something different. He thought a moment, then said, "Yes. In one of these pieces I like the way the horns come in, full tilt."

"Then," said the musician, "you go home, and find that record, and play that part. Play it over and over, and keep on playing it. And the next time you see me, you tell me what happened to your musical taste."

The rich Westerner went home to his house full of phonograph records. He found the record he liked, and played it through till he found the part "where the horns came in." Then he played that part over and over. Every time he put the record on to play that horn selection again he got a few grooves of the rest of the composition. By and by he began to feel acquainted with the whole piece, and to like it. From there he gained a friendly feeling toward other compositions of the same master. And by the time he saw the musician again, a year later, he had made himself an enthusiast for a lot of other symphonic music too.

That's the way to start. Get yourself on the inside of music somehow and look around and out! With the feeling that you're an authority on even a small section of music you can begin to survey the field and see what there is in other music that *gets* people. There is much misunderstanding about music. People belittle themselves about it. They feel mean and impoverished because, forsooth, they think they do not enjoy music in the correct way.

But what do you mean by "enjoy?" You enjoy a turkey dinner, don't you? Yet the turkey is but a small part of the whole affair. If the dinner were all turkey, you'd soon lose your taste for the bird. You enjoy a love story, but the actual hugging and kissing takes place only after two hundred pages of "he said" and "she said" and other trivia. You like a horse race, or a prize fight, but in either one the climax is brief, and the dull periods are many.

There are dull periods in music too. Why don't the experts tell you so? You build up to a climax, you enjoy the climax, and then you start at scratch and build up to a high moment again. The high moments, such as the song, "Celeste,

Aïda," are exciting and are easy to enjoy. What do you do during the intervals? You sit there and wait and enjoy your own thoughts. The music goes on. It may be unexciting;[1] it may or may not be particularly pleasing; but you should at least find it restful. Take it as it comes! You would not ask a composer to keep you at the pitch of ecstasy for two-and-a-half hours, would you?

You remember perhaps when you read *Ben-Hur*. The actual chariot race comes after several hundred pages of comparatively mild story. Then you have the stupendous race, packed into about ten pages. Could you stand it if the whole book were written at that pitch? It would sound as false as a radio scare-drama.

In no phase of life is ecstasy maintained for longer than a few minutes at a time. You must not expect music to be a concentrated dose of four-alarm fires. Your nerves couldn't stand the pace. Consider one of the wisest psychologists who ever put pen to paper, a dramatist named Shakespeare. After a scene of tragedy he introduced a comic scene, to let the audience relax its tense nerves. Shakespeare knew that too much is much too much.

I want to be explicit about this because I have found a lot of otherwise admirable citizens who keep themselves unhappy because they think the "right people" have something on them when it comes to appreciating good music.

Trust your own instincts, I say!

Like what you like, and be unashamed about it. You enjoy a good show, don't you? There's nothing wrong with your emotions, is there? You laugh when something strikes you as funny, and are sober and thoughtful when some problem

[1] "The dull moments in good music are those which you cannot YET follow," says Burton Garlinghouse reprovingly at this point. "There are high spots, but what lies between is not necessarily dull." Granted! What seems dull at first can become delightful on further acquaintance. But the beginner, and even the hardened music-listener, is bound to find some pieces he likes more than others. I favor honest enthusiasms and even an honest dislike or two. Why not? We can listen to only a few pieces in an evening, and why shouldn't they be pleasing ones?

is to be solved? You manage to make a living with your body and your brain?

Why can't you be equally intelligent about music? Enjoy what seems good to you. Most of us are inherently provincial in our tastes, liking what we are familiar with and resenting too much novelty. All right! Like what you like.

As for the other pieces in a concert, the selections that are strange and new and possibly meaningless to you, give them a chance to win your friendship. If parts of them frankly bore you, that is not a new experience. All audiences tire. The attention period of any individual is limited. In a child, the attention period is only a minute-and-a-half. After that, it's just manners that keeps a child quiet and keeps him listening, so they tell me.

Perhaps we can develop restraint long enough until pieces that at first seemed unattractive prove their right to our friendship. For after all the capacity to like good music is something that grows.

Suppose you're going to a concert, and you halfway dread it. You expect you'll be *bored*. You won't get your money's worth! Left to yourself you'd probably rather stay home with a good book, or join some friends at the bowling alley.

Just as an experiment, hunt up an advance copy of the program for that concert. (The music editor of your local paper will gladly give it to you.) Then step into your local music store and ask them to play some or all of those phonograph records to you. Get a toe hold in each one of these compositions before you go to the concert. Make up your mind which piece or pieces you like—which numbers you will watch for and enjoy. And then, when the orchestra swings into those pieces you have just discovered you like, make the most of your big moment.

You see how a little acquaintanceship can widen your enjoyment. More than that, after a time your friends will start asking you, "What's extra good in the program tonight?" You'll begin to be a little local authority, and that is always pleasing to the pride.

Not every piece in every musical program will be your

own special favorite. After all, you and I musn't be selfish! Other people have their preferences too. The piece you like the least may speak the very language of your neighbor.

Some years ago, when George Horace Lorimer was editing the *Saturday Evening Post*, he met a close friend on the street. The friend said, "George, that was a mighty good magazine you put out this week. I read every article and every story."

"Then I made a serious mistake," said Lorimer. "I don't intend every story and every article in any one issue to appeal to any one type of reader. I want something in every issue to appeal to several very different kinds of readers."

So if a musical program you sit through has some numbers you don't happen to enjoy as much as others, have a little patience. The program director may know what he is doing. After all, there are even people who order veal when they can get real food in restaurants. There simply is no accounting for tastes, and music is no exception.

I feel more kindly toward the kinds of music I used to resent, since I have been attending orchestra rehearsals and talking with music experts. I spent a couple of days in Washington, D. C., listening to Lieutenant Charles Benter drill the famous United States Navy Band. I spent two equally delightful days listening to Fabien Sevitzky drill the Indianapolis Symphony.

Some of the music Sevitzky was working on got me instantly. Other selections puzzled me. I challenged him with that.

"Tell me, Mr. Sevitzy," I asked, "why is it that some music just doesn't seem to have any tune?"

He asked, in honest bewilderment, "What do you mean, 'no tune'?"

"You can't whistle it," I said. "It doesn't seem to be going anywhere. It doesn't have any pattern!"

He felt himself on solid ground. "But there MUST be a pattern! There is a pattern in every musical composition. IF

YOU DON'T GET THAT PATTERN, IT IS MY FAULT—THE ORCHESTRA LEADER'S!"

That made me feel better. As the two days progressed I began to see that after you hear a piece a few times, you do catch the pattern. We are at first suspicious and doubtful. But give us the same piece a few more times, especially when the orchestra conductor interprets the piece so that the composer's meaning is made clear to us, and we begin to catch the story, and usually, to like it.

What kind of music should you try to like, and try to play, or listen to? Where should you begin?

Start with any kind of music you like. Start with the music that is immediately at hand. Then start growing from there.

Do you like hill-billy music? I can show you college professors who talk deeply, explaining that much of our native folk songs go back to Elizabethan times. They were imported almost direct from England, some centuries ago, and preserved, almost intact, in the mountain tunes of Kentucky. And your songs of the Western plains, by the same token, derive largely from the French.

Start with your hill-billy songs, then, if you want, and make a serious study of them. You can make yourself and your subject respected!

Do you like light opera? Get acquainted with the Gilbert and Sullivan operas. Show less-informed people how Sullivan always balances the light, fanciful music of the girls against the heavy, ponderous music of the men. In *Iolanthe* the fairy chorus sings dainty strains, while the chorus of Peers struts in magnificent self-importance. In the *Pirates of Penzance*, in *Pinafore*, and all the rest, you get the same contrast. You can make a study of Gilbert and Sullivan.

Do you like march music? Sousa is always easy to take. Your next step may be Elgar, a sort of Sousa's march with Sunday clothes on. Go on from there!

Do you like, say, Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*, but feel you don't understand much about it? Just keep on listening

to it. Note how Beethoven created the main melody out of just four notes. See how he repeats these four notes, over and over, at different places on the scale, and plays them with different instruments. As you listen you'll discover something about counterpoint (meaning a secondary melody at some other part of the accompaniment) and contrapuntal effects. You'll hear that melody chased all over the keyboard by one instrument after another, by the violins, the cellos, the bassoons, the violas, and so on. The oftener you listen to the piece, the more you get out of it. That's all it takes.

If you have some likes and some prejudices, that is entirely natural. A few prejudices save a heap of experimenting, and we all develop our own cautions as we grow older. True, a prejudice may shut us out of an interesting experience, too, so it's well to keep open-minded and to avoid too much brittleness of mind. But in music, which is above all arts a personal art, you have a right to your own tastes and your own preferences.

A highly trained musical friend of mine, a woman, says "When anyone goes to see a Wagnerian opera, I advise shutting the eyes and just listening to the music, rather than watching the stage. The reason is that Wagner's stagecraft is so old-fashioned that it creaks. What you see actually detracts from your enjoyment."

That's *her* prejudice—and maybe she's right.

Another friend, music critic of a newspaper, likes Wagner, but finds most first acts lengthy and boring. *Tristan and Isolde* finds him absent during the dull first act. He arrives at the beginning of Act Two, fresh as a daisy and expecting good things for the balance of the evening.

Yesterday's prejudices sometimes look funny, to be sure. Wagner's contemporaries ridiculed him because he violated precedent. César Franck's audience walked out on his *Symphony in D-Minor*. Leopold Stokowski has trouble persuading an audience today to sit through a thirty-minute dissonant composition by one Arnold Schoenberg, the man who uses twelve notes in the scale instead of eight. Francesco DeLeone once told me of a composition he heard by a

modern composer, in which the left hand was played on the BLACK keys, and the right hand on the WHITE keys, a half-tone higher. Are such things interesting innovations that we should watch for and encourage, or is somebody just acting smart with what might be good music? Time probably will answer.

All of us are different people. We can agree on some things we like, and disagree widely on other things. It seems well to expose your musical tastes to music that other people in large numbers have found satisfying; but let there be no compulsion about swallowing all of it. Not, at least, until you are ready to, and can taste and enjoy each bite as you go.

By and large we need to be ourselves—to have faith in our own judgment and our own tastes—and to get away from feeling we have to copy anybody else. For instance, the young man who holds down No. 1 chair in the first violins with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra gave me an idea.

"I suppose you'll learn a lot from watching Heifetz practice this afternoon and play in the concert here tomorrow and Saturday," I suggested.

"No, I won't learn anything from watching Heifetz," he answered promptly. "I have my training and my own technique. I wouldn't get anywhere changing, or trying to change. Plenty of people have tried to IMITATE Heifetz, but it won't go. He can do things no one else can. He can jump from *here* to *here*"—he illustrated this on his own violin—"and get away with it. But he's Heifetz. He has those fingers and that technique."

In other words, don't imitate anybody else. Borrow other people's enthusiasm, if you care to, at the start. But develop your own insight into music. Surely there is enough variety here so you can cut your own path. Trust your own judgment—that's much of the fun of choosing music as your special hobby.

CHAPTER XII[1]

LET'S GET A FEW DEFINITIONS

Beethoven's famous *Fifth Symphony* is titled *Symphony in C-Minor*, but you play it in three flats (E-flat).

"Why is that?" I asked a music professor when I started the research for this book.

He swallowed his surprise and patiently explained, "Every signature has both a major and minor key. C is the relative minor of the key of E-flat major."

Ho-hum, I thought. Anything to make a subject complicated. Then with a little searching I made up a musical alphabet that began "C-minor is actually the key of E-flat" and went on to "A-sharp-minor is actually the key of C-sharp, or seven sharps." Then I showed this to Lillian Baldwin.

"You're simplifying it a little too much," she said tactfully. "Here, I'll write it out for you," and she did.

"A key signature is a sort of general direction for a tonal adventure which has at least two possibilities, depending on the steps you take, once you're started," she explained. "The signature of three flats usually means that you start out on E-flat and proceed by whole steps, except between three and four, and seven and eight, which are half steps. Such procedure gives you a major mood or tonality, which, named for the starting tone, we call the key (or scale) of E-flat-major.

[1] This chapter makes use of some copyrighted material from the Educational Concert Series of the Cleveland Orchestra which is a yearly feature in Cleveland. This material, used here by permission, is prepared by Lillian L. Baldwin, Supervisor of Music Appreciation in the Cleveland Schools and also Consultant in Music Education for the Cleveland Orchestra. The author's hearty thanks to Miss Baldwin for permission to quote her here.
F. B. B.

"But supposing, with this same three-flat signature, you notice that the B-flat mark is cancelled to a natural; that is the first and best indication that the mood is not major. You will then have to back down to C below that E-flat on which you started before, and as soon as you have played the first three notes, C-D-E-flat, you know that you have a minor key or scale with the half-steps falling between two and three, five and six, seven and eight. And again, naming it for that starting note, C, you have the key of C-minor.

"So it isn't that E-flat is really C-minor, but that the signature of three flats can indicate *either* E-flat-major *or* C-minor.

"Why is music written thus? Well, why is any technical process reduced to a formula? Because it is the best man can do to try to put into communicable symbols the elusive and incommunicable thing known as a mood or feeling.

"Those who must work with that process—musicians in this case—soon learn to interpret the formula and to respect it, just as the druggist does the doctor's prescription. As for the listener, it will prove interesting if he cares for that sort of thing. Otherwise it is no more his business than the ferreting out of the doctor's prescription. His not to question why, but to benefit, if possible, by the result of two other persons' knowledge of that formula or key signature—those persons being the composer and the player."

Well, maybe you who read this book already knew that, and you may be bored at my naïveté in going round and asking simple questions. But I find that many people don't know a great many things they feel they ought to know. Every trade has its vocabulary, and the layman should not be as diffident as he sometimes is about asking questions.

Miss Baldwin has made a serious study of this job of simplifying the necessary explanations of music. The Cleveland schools do a considerable job, a co-operating job, a continuing job, of making thousands of youngsters familiar with great music. Through classroom work, through the school board's own radio system and through musical events revolving around Severance Hall, Cleveland is able to do a job of

inculcating a love of music into young people which has an immeasurable effect for good. Who knows how many potential boy criminals are led into paths of usefulness because this training in music makes these boys gentle and friendly, instead of obstinate and hard?

For several years Cleveland has been able to move the Metropolitan Opera Company from New York to Cleveland's Public Auditorium for a solid week of opera. The season is always underwritten by local businessmen, but so far at least there has never been a deficit. The reason is that every year a new group of adolescents is ready to join with the already sizable body of Cleveland music-lovers in supporting their own opera.

Cleveland has found how to make children not only unafraid of great music but actually fond of it; so fond and so knowing that Cleveland grownups say, "If only *I* had had their chance when I was younger!" And you should see the papas at Twilight Concerts, and the mamas at the Music Memory and Appreciation contests which are a yearly activity at Severance Hall.

Lillian Baldwin teaches people to love music by letting them hear music, generously and frequently. But she asks for a reasonable amount of musical intelligence, too.

"I tell my pupils they'll get more enjoyment out of music if they learn a few rules," she says. "For instance, I told a boy recently that I don't happen to enjoy baseball, and I know the reason why! *It's because I don't know the rules.* I see a man running, I hear people cheering, but I don't have much idea of what happened, or what led up to that cheering. But I do know I'm missing something, worse luck!

"It's the same in music. You need to know what to look for! Certain things happen in a certain way. It is much more interesting to you if you are in the know."

That much seems reasonable. Lillian Baldwin's ideas always are sound sense! And so I asked her, "How much, or how little, does a beginner need to know to start enjoying music?"

"I think," she said, "that if you are attempting to explain the simplest elements of music, it might help you to read the

study material I prepared for one of our beginners' programs," she said. She dug into a drawer and brought out a 48-page pamphlet labeled *For Little Folks*.

So because Miss Baldwin's definitions are much more explicit and readable than most of the stuff I have seen in music books, I hand you her explanation of a suite, and some others.

What Is a Suite?

"In music a *suite* is a set of short pieces that belong together," writes Lillian Baldwin in her copyrighted pamphlet. "When composers first began to write music for instruments they found it hard to make their pieces long enough. It was easy enough to make long songs. Since each verse was different, people didn't mind singing the same tune over a dozen times. The same was true with dances. The dancers had such a good time dancing that they didn't care if the fiddler did play the same tune over and over. But instrumental music was different. Listeners couldn't stand it to *hear* the same thing over and over. You know how it is; when you listen you want a tune to say something new, now and then.

"In order to make their pieces long enough without too much repeating, composers hit upon the bright idea of putting several short tunes together in a set, or as the French people say, a *suite*. The very first suites were sets of dance tunes, and to make them as interesting as possible, the composers chose different kinds of dances, some fast and gay, others slow and stately. Later a little song-tune would sometimes slip into the suite. Then many years later when composers began to write story music, they made a new kind of a suite. These new suites were sets of tunes, each one telling a part of the same story, such as the 'Nutcracker Suite.' So now we have the two kinds of suites—the old-time dance suites and the newer suites. Both are nice!"

What Is a Fugue?

"A *fugue* is a piece of music for several voices, either human or instrument voices. These voices do not begin to sing

all at the same time and make chords with each other as voices do in a chorus or hymn tune, or in an orchestra piece. The fugue was invented hundreds of years before people thought of dressing up a tune with alto, tenor and bass parts.

"A fugue is really nothing but a fancy, grown-up round. Surely you know 'Hot Cross Buns' and 'Three Blind Mice!' In a round or fugue the tune, instead of going along alone, accompanies itself!

"A *round* is shorter and simpler than a fugue and has only one little tune, sung in one key. A fugue has more than one tune. Besides the main tune which each voice must sing as it joins in the flight, there are also other little tunes and fancy touches scattered along the way to make the fugue more interesting. Of course, these less important tunes have to be made to sound well with the main tune which some voice is pretty sure to be singing. If a composer is careless about these less important tunes his fugue will be just discords.

"One of the most important differences between a round and a fugue is in the ending. A round just peters out. One by one the voices come to the end of the tune and stop singing. The music grows thinner and thinner and the last starter is left to finish the piece all by himself. Quite different is the fugue. Like a river made by many little streams flowing together, it grows broader and stronger as it goes along. No voice drops out of a fugue even if it has finished the main tune. It can keep busy with one of those less important tunes or add some fancy touch of its own, but it must keep in the running. It means to make a grand finish.

"What is a fugue? Why, a fugue is a piece of music in which one voice begins to sing a little tune, the other voices take it up, one at a time, and come chasing after; soon all the parts of the tune seem to be sounding at once until the fugue, which began so simply, ends with a crowd of notes and a crowd of voices."

"A *prelude* to an opera is simply the part they play before the curtain rises. There may be several preludes to an opera—one before each act—but there is only one overture. The

overture is meant to start imaginations working and give people an idea of what they are about to hear. You can usually tell from the overture whether a play is to be merry or sad. Sometimes the composer gives the audience samples of the music of the opera. He does this by weaving bits of the song tunes into the overture. So the overture is not only a part of the entertainment, but often, the best part.

"An *oratorio* is like an opera, except that there is no scenery and the singers do not wear fancy costumes or move about.

"A *scherzo* is a light, laughing bit of music.

"A *nocturne* is a piece of night music. It is never light and dancing like a scherzo. A nocturne is always slow-moving.

"Then come three words which are often confused. They are: *sonata*, *concerto*, and *symphony*.

"*Sonata* is the pattern name. You can have a sonata for one instrument, such as the piano. A *concerto* is a sonata for a one-solo instrument with an orchestra accompaniment. And a *symphony* is a sonata, built into a pageant, so to speak, and written for a complete orchestra.

"Counterpoint is the musical pattern made by two or more independent tunes which, when heard together, note or 'point' against point, make a pleasant combination."

What Is a Symphony?

"Symphony is the name of the most grown-up music in the world.

"A symphony is a group of pieces for the orchestra. There are usually four of these pieces and they are made after music's largest and finest pattern—the *sonata* pattern. The pieces of a symphony are rather like children in a family. They are related and they share certain family traits, yet each piece has its own name and disposition just as each child has. Symphony pieces have pretty Italian names which tell whether they are lively, quiet, joking, or a bit noisy.

"The first child in a symphony family is larger than the others, is well developed and lively—a boy, I should say. His name is usually *Allegro*, which means gay and active. Sometimes, like our Mary Anns and John Henrys, he has a double

name, *Allegro moderato* or *Allegro vivace* which tells even more about him.

"The second child is a gentle, even-tempered girl, loved for her sweet singing. Her name is *Andante*. Next comes a little sister, quite different from Andante, a laughing, dancing child called *Minuet* or *Scherzo*, which means joke.

"The fourth, a boy again, is even livelier than his older brother. He is so full of high spirits that he goes racing along and often ends up with a bang! Because he is last, he is usually named *Finale*, but some composers, thinking of his disposition, calls him *Presto*, which means quick and all-of-a-sudden.

"But putting aside our fancy of a symphony family, let us come back to the two things to remember about a symphony. First, a symphony is a large composition usually of four parts—*Allegro*, *Andante*, *Minuet*, *or Scherzo*, and *Finale*—named for their moods. Musicians call these pieces or parts of a symphony, *movements*, because they think first of how the music moves, whether fast or slow. You will often hear people speaking of the first movement, the last movement, or the slow movement of a symphony.

"We usually hear all four pieces or movements of a symphony played one after the other, just as we read all the chapters of a book or watch the acts of a play. But there are some symphony movements so beautiful that they are also played as separate pieces.

"The second important thing to remember about a symphony is that it is *always* written for the orchestra. You cannot hear a symphony for piano, drum, mouth organ or any other instrument. The very word *symphony* means 'sounding together,' and that tells you there must be many instruments.

"But while a symphony is a piece for orchestra, not all orchestras are symphony orchestras. Four or five men playing for a dance, or at a theater or hotel, may call themselves an orchestra but not a symphony orchestra. It takes many instruments—strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion, to make a symphony orchestra; it takes artists—skillful players and a wise and musicianly leader to play a symphony well. And it

takes a great composer, one who has many musical ideas and knows how to express them clearly and beautifully, to write a symphony; for a symphony, as I told you, is the most grown-up music in the world."

"It seems to me," I said bluntly to Miss Baldwin, "that the popularity of symphony music is growing, while grand opera is dying out."

"That might be," she said surprisingly, "and for a rather good reason. Opera is a hybrid art: it tries to do two things at once. That is not natural. You see how forced it is in such an affair as Tristan's prolonged death agonies. People don't act that way. They don't make love with heaving chests. They don't parade their emotions publicly.

"Drama works up to a climax—a denouement—and then goes swiftly out. Music normally works in a circle, coming back to the main idea."

It is easier to follow the pattern of a symphony, it seems to me, than to make sense out of the average opera. Also, there are not so many dull patches of recitative in a symphony!

When I started the research work on this book I consulted with nearly a dozen professors of music in famous institutions. What sort of a book, I asked, would they suggest that I write?

The best answer I received ran as follows: "It seems to me your mission should definitely be that of encouragement—a psychological rather than a technical contribution. There are too many so-called short cuts for the layman, most of which offend the professional and only muddle the would-be music consumer."

It did seem, though, as if I ought to boil down a few musical essentials so as to save the reader of this book that much leg-work! I asked Professor James H. Hall, professor of Music Appreciation at Oberlin College, if I might attend a couple of days' sessions. He said, "No, that wouldn't be helpful to you, because we take up each subject in such detail."

As a reasonable substitute, I asked Professor Hall to clock

off what he considered the bare minimum for a beginner in music.

"You have to start first with TONE," said Professor Hall.

"Then comes RHYTHM. Then MELODY. And then the HARMONY.

"The rhythm determines whether you are listening to or playing a march, a waltz, a stately symphony, or a sprightly jig. The melody is of course the tune—something catchy that you can remember. The tone is the agreeable part of the music, because it makes a lot of difference whether a sound is ludicrous, like a cow's moan, or deep and soothing, like a long note on a cello, or sharp and stirring, like the call of a bugle.

"Any music-lover ought to know a few chords, so he can find them on the piano. That's the harmony.

"When you have these four things you start with some ideas as to form, or DESIGN. You learn there is a main theme and some variations—a contrasting idea. The main theme we call 'A.' The second theme, 'B,' is a contrasting idea, contrast being a law of life. The piece very probably comes back to 'A' again, giving the pattern of 'A-B-A,' and bringing the unity that comes by repetition.[2]

"This in brief is the pattern of a movement of a symphony. And I suggest you talk about such things as symphonies, and stress that phase of your music outline, more than the human voice, because this age is instrument-minded."

[2] Some people call "A" the statement or exposition; "B" the contrast, the suspense, or the plot development; and "A" the reminder, the recapitulation, the happy ending. Everybody will understand what you mean if you speak of A-B-A.

Lillian Baldwin, I find, has pictured this typical skeleton of sonata design in one of her pamphlets. So for the sake of clarity, let's reproduce her outline here:

PICTORIAL ANALYSIS OF AN AVERAGE FIRST MOVEMENT OF A SYMPHONY

I "A" EXPOSITION	II "B" DEVELOPMENT	III "A" RECAPITULATION
Introduction (Optional) Theme I (Usually followed by a short bridge passage) Theme II (In contrasting Key) Closing Theme (Optional) Brief Coda (Optional)	The familiar themes recreated by new rhythms and harmonies, new phrase combinations and even new melodic material.	Theme I (Restated. Often followed by a bridge passage) Theme II (Usually in home key of Theme I) Closing Theme (Optional) Coda (Optional)
Duality of harmony—two keys	Plurality—several keys	Unity—one key

And then, Professor Hall went on, you have to get into the problem of performance. A music book might well treat of different mediums. Thus a tone is not a single thing, but ties together a lot of overtones. Thus—he demonstrated by walking over to the piano—if you strike lower C and hold the key down while you hit a note an octave higher or an octave lower, the first note will pick up this overtone and hold it.

And then, said Professor Hall, you come to the subject of orchestral tones—and the different ways they are made, whether the string is bowed, or struck, or plucked.

And then you go on, said the Professor, and deal with the elements of music. Help open your readers' ears, so they can listen to music and appreciate it!

"Music is a time art," said Professor Hall, "and you must practice to increase the span that you can hear and recall, gradually extending from a phrase to an entire section, and onwards. Your aim then should be to increase your ability to understand.

"And so," he said, pointing to the outline of my various chapters, "don't shut yourself away from music, even if you think you don't like this piece or that one. Rather, increase your powers to understand and enjoy.

"A musician is distinguished from the amateur by his ability to stay with the music mentally," he continued.

"It helps if you can say 'This pattern is in twos, or threes; whether it is in the major or minor mode. It helps too if you can identify the instrument making the sounds. Listen sharply till you can hear the various instruments distinctly.

"Your final purpose in listening is not to analyze the music but to enjoy it, because music is primarily an emotional experience.

"Later, out of your subconscious mind, you can reconstruct part of your experience, and know why you enjoyed it as you did."

May I add that all the music teachers and professors of music I have met and talked with are approachable and charming, and that they are in thorough sympathy with any move to

acquaint wider audiences with the better things in music. *Don't be afraid to get acquainted with your local music experts.* Sitting down for an hour and talking music with a living person will be more fruitful, I should say, than puzzling over a lot of dull definitions in any book. Find out what you like in music and explore in that direction.

My whole idea in presenting any definitions whatever is merely to save you the embarrassment of having to ask the first beginner's questions.

CHAPTER XIII

HELP YOURSELF TO MUSIC! SELECT YOUR OWN FAVORITE PIECES

Not long ago I attended the regular weekly broadcast of the big United States Army Band. It was good, and I was interested to watch the calm, effortless way those cornet players lifted their horns at precisely the right moment and came in with a powerful blow, in one smooth motion. I forget what the piece was, but I liked it. Liked the whole program, in fact.

Riding back from the Army War College with the representative of the National Broadcasting Company who had put the program on the air, I asked him how much he likes music. He handles hundreds of such broadcasts every year for the Army, the Navy, the Marines, he said. Did he, I asked, get fed up on music?

"I still like some pieces," he said. "Ravel's 'Bolero,' for instance. I think I would never get tired of that."

That's one man's opinion. Another man tells me he'd never tire of hearing Georges Enesco's "Rumanian Rhapsody." The reason is, he explains, that he heard Enesco himself rehearse an orchestra in this piece. Enesco stopped the players midway and said, "This piece is supposed to describe two drunken shepherds on a hillside. Now play it so the audience can SEE those two drunken shepherds." And they did!

This same friend adds he could stand a lot of Beethoven's concertos. He's the friend, by the way, who carries a miniature score to symphony concerts and follows along, pencil in hand, with the orchestra conductor. He makes a *study* of his music, which is all right, of course, if yours is the studious type of mind.

Coming back to people with more simple tastes, let's suggest a few favorite pieces that everybody should know and which nearly everybody usually likes.

First of all, how many musical compositions are there? Thousands; perhaps tens of thousands. An all-request program for a "pop concert" by a symphony orchestra recently brought in 2,500 different request numbers. That's a lot of pieces. Orchestra people tell me there are about one hundred and fifty good old stand-bys that are played every season. They are the apple-pie-and-ice-cream of the musical menu.

Some of these one hundred and fifty are listed by the Music Department of Berea College, Berea, Kentucky, in brief excerpts handed to music pupils on mimeographed sheets. *Every* pupil ought to be able, the department feels, to recognize Schubert's "Hark, Hark the Lark," Handel's "Pastoral Symphony" from *The Messiah*, the first movement of Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*, Dvořák's *New World Symphony*, Johann Sebastian Bach's *Suite No. 2 for Flute and Strings*, Wagner's "Prelude" to *Lohengrin*, and of course such old favorites as the "Sextet" from Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, the children's prayer from *Hänsel and Gretel* by Humperdinck, and the main themes from Verdi's *La Traviata* and Verdi's *Aïda.* Also given are brief themes from Richard Strauss's *Rosenkavalier*, from *Boris Godounoff* by Moussorgsky, the gay Spanish dance from Bizet's *Carmen*, and some others.

Radio Station WQXR in New York City has a one-hour program from 11 P.M. to midnight each night, called "Just Music." These programs are made up both of request numbers and of standard classics which the station's program director finds some reason to include.

Looking over a sample week's programs I am impressed with the vast number of pieces which don't seem familiar; at least, not by name. Very possibly WQXR makes a practice of giving its listeners a stated per cent of familiar pieces, plus a certain per cent of newcomers—just as a swimming instructor lures the beginner a few strokes away from shore so as to develop further self-reliance.

More familiar is a program, just come to hand, of the musical clubs of a boys' school. It ranges from the "Dance of the Hours," from *La Giaconda*, and the finale from Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony* to "Nobody Knows the Trouble I've Seen" and the "March of the Peers" from *Iolanthe*. Good stuff; not too lofty, yet not too lowly.

It was a cheery Saturday afternoon in 1913. Two of us were walking up Broadway in New York. We came to the Empire Theatre and decided to go in. It was a musical play, and a new one to me. The name was *Iolanthe*; the composers, Gilbert and Sullivan; the show—tops.

It happened I was living in a small bachelor apartment on West 15th Street. In the same building was Alexander Woollcott, then reporter and occasionally dramatic critic for the *New York Times*. Alex bought me the scores for three or four of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, and I learned to play them. Together we explored some of the revivals. I remember one evening in a theater in Brooklyn. The play was the *Mikado*, which was never Woollcott's favorite, largely because it is too saccharine. He reminded me that one of the most delightful songs—I think it is "He's going to marry Yum-Yum"—appears only once, and then casually, and in the middle of a long selection by the chorus. Together we watched for the exact moment to start applauding and make the orchestra go back and give us an encore.

For years thereafter I was an amateur expert on Gilbert and Sullivan. Came marriage, and from time to time I dragged my luckless spouse to such catastrophes as *Ruddigore*, produced by a church choir. The best would have been bad enough, but to make matters worse, the leading tenor got sick at the last minute, and a substitute had to walk through his part and *read* the songs in his everyday street voice. That was pretty dreary; but even poor Gilbert and Sullivan is better than none. After all, when you already know the opera, no one can entirely ruin it for you.

One of the most enjoyable operas I ever attended was *Aïda*, given by a group of Italian singers at the old Thalia Theatre

on the Bowery in New York City. The costumes were faded and no longer pretty, but the singing was done with spirit and the audience applauded spontaneously.

Another performance that was a milestone in my life is *Die Meistersinger*, given in its entirety and in German at the theater in Munich reserved especially for Wagnerian works. This was a test of a music-lover's patience. We were in our seats before six, walked around for a sandwich and a glass of beer during the first intermission, and enjoyed a complete dinner, if we cared for it, during the second and longer intermission. These veteran Bavarian music-lovers took their Wagner in large doses, and accompanied with plenty of food and drink. But they were businesslike about the performance. When the bell rang you had to be back in your seat because late-comers were not admitted.

I'm glad to have seen *Die Meistersinger*, just as I am glad to have seen and loved Munich and other parts of lower Germany before the Hitler regime spoiled them for us. But I'm satisfied to take the "Prize Song" and the "Overture" and let the rest of this heavy-humored Wagnerian opera go by the board. Doubtless the rest of this opera grows on you on further acquaintance, but the "Prize Song" makes an immediate and universal appeal.

"What is your favorite grand opera?" I asked a businessman friend who has heard them all, and some of them many times.

"It's *Forza del Destino*, by Verdi," he answered promptly. "That was one of Caruso's best."

This man is smart. He can listen to operas that other people patronize in large numbers, and can enjoy *Carmen* and *Il Trovatore* and *Rigoletto* and the rest—but when it comes to choosing his own particular "best," he bows to no man. He knows enough music to trust his own tastes.

And that is what I urge you to do. Be your own authority in music!

The Victor record catalogue is a closely printed book of 624 pages, listing *thousands* of pieces. A bandmaster tells me he probably could play a thousand pieces more or less well without the music; he has no idea how many hundreds more he has

a superficial acquaintance with. The United States Navy Band has a library of over ten thousand complete scores—marches, symphonies, fantasies, descriptives and all.

The very wealth of music is apt to bog you down. You may feel discouraged about *starting* to get acquainted with music. After all, as the sculptor said, "Art is long, and life is short"—and we are no longer children.

But don't get discouraged. The fact that there are so many likable pieces in music gives you some advantage. Every way you turn you'll find something new and interesting. You can't go wrong, as long as you keep on exploring. All you need is a healthy bump of curiosity, and a reasonably good memory.

After a while you'll begin to specialize. Just as a stamp collector shuts his eyes to every distraction and concentrates on precanceled stamps of the U.S.A., or whatever; just as a collector of antiques goes in for hobnail glass or some other special family of curios, so you will carve out your own little corner in music.

So I suggest you don't attempt to master all of music at one time. Be reasonable in your appetites. In fact, till you know your way around more, you might be wise to hold to what you already know and like. Don't feel you have to outgrow your today's favorites in music.

Some of my wise friends re-read a few favorite books every couple of years. I know a New York advertising man who reads *Alice in Wonderland* once a year. He pooh-poohs the idea that this is a kid's book. I know of another who re-reads the *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin* every couple of years. Others have their own stand-bys. Thus, a millionaire businessman told me once he urges his executives to read Emerson's essay on Self-Reliance any time they feel discouraged. "No matter how often you read it," he told me—and I was surprised at his earnestness, for he didn't seem to be a lettered man—"you discover something new. You keep seeing new things, just as when you go back and visit Niagara Falls again you see some new wonders through the mist."

In food, the wise traveler simplifies his life. In a city hotel he passes up the entrees with the fancy names, preferring roast

beef; on a diner he finds a lamb chop always tasty, always hot, and not too expensive; in a country restaurant he knows he is safest with ham and eggs. Likewise in music it is well to simplify our lives by having a few pieces we never tire of, and pieces we always enjoy. I have mine, you have yours. As for what your favorites are or will be, that is your special adventure. I have nothing to sell you.

The pieces you choose as your special favorites may be associated in your memory with a pleasant holiday, or a certain moonlight evening, or some other unusual and memorable adventure. You may have danced with a certain person to a certain tune and taken it to your heart forever after.

Your favorite tunes can be many, and of different kinds. In nationalistic numbers you may like *Finlandia* by Sibelius. You may have a special fondness for one of Liszt's "Hungarian Rhapsodies." Yet with a raucous crowd you might be proud to be able to sing "Baffin's Bay" and the musical tale of the Prodigal Son.

Your list of favorites will grow, and should grow. And of course you don't have to pioneer in exploring out the pieces you will probably like. For the most part you are safe in accepting the judgment of others. The Victor record catalogue, for instance, lists several pages headed "The Music America Loves Best." This may be a good starting point.

But make your own choice. Don't be too much bound by some other fellow's likes or by his prejudices. The fact that somebody else doesn't like something you like may mean only that he lacks perception. He may be missing something that you are keen enough to dig out and enjoy.

So while it is important, for the sake of companionship, to share the musical tastes of others, so it may be equally important to have a special little corner of music to which you can retire, and to which no one can seek entrance. The wise man is willing to live in a glass house in many things, but it is also wise not to bare your soul to all lookers.

When you listen to music, plan to have a little contrast. Don't steep yourself in any one mood, or listen to any one

composer, too steadily. You may tire! Cooks frequently become bored with their own cooking. And the natives of Switzerland are not the most ardent admirers of the Alps. It is possible to get too much of a good thing.

So give your musical palate a rest and a variety. Bring in a simple lullaby now and then, or a march, or a college medley, along with the heavier selections. Papa Haydn had his jokes in music, and you can have yours. Don't even be snobbish to the better popular tunes of the day. After all, mere man was not intended to live on Mount Olympus. The air there is too thin.

You can enjoy music on different levels, and for different purposes. Brahms and Johann Sebastian Bach wrote some splendid stuff, and it is enjoyable at the right time and place. But when you take the front off the old upright piano for a crowd of men to start singing, you'll probably prefer "Oh my darling, Nellie Gray" or "Put on your old grey bonnet" or "Tenting on the old camp ground" to anything of Brahms.

Your musical tastes will be partly an inheritance, carried along from your school days, and partly an achievement. You will acquire your likes in part because of your opportunities and your associates—and in part as a reaction against drab and imprisoning surroundings. You may feel a hunger for something better than your immediate circle can give you. You may need comradeship beyond what your home group, as at present set up, can give you, or can help you to find. Perhaps then a year's subscription to a music magazine might prove helpful; might even freshen you up so you could bring back to your local crowd something new of inspiration through music. I always advise any hobbyist to subscribe to some magazine: gives new contacts, widens horizons.

If you have friends who bring musical references into the conversation, don't let that awe you. Theirs is only an opinion. And maybe they're just trying to start a conversation.

Suppose someone says, haughtily, "I prefer Beethoven's *Eighth Symphony* to his *Fifth*." Your cue may be to come

back with, "Is that the one that goes . . ." and then hum a snatch of whatever comes into your head. If your friend is bluffing, he or she won't be able to correct you. If he or she happens to know, you have given an excellent opportunity for him or her to strut some real knowledge.

If somebody says "My favorite is Beethoven's *Eroica*—because most of the others are played so often they've become threadbare," you can agree with that, even though you keep your fingers crossed. After all, the world of music is broad enough so you can find plenty of points of agreement with your friends. You seldom need to fight over any point in music.

Because your enjoyment of music is the greatest when you share it with sympathetic listeners, it might be well to organize a community group that could make a serious study of music, and listen to it too. Such a group might well make a brief study of the lives of your favorite composers.

This information is available to you in any library, and a better acquaintance with the man helps toward a better appreciation of his music.

You'll get acquainted, for instance, with Haydn, a slow but prolific composer who gave us *The Creation*, and who by grouping the instruments together, gave us the modern symphony orchestra. And César Franck, the quiet church organist who lived a beaten life but was never discouraged. And Handel, who wrote *The Messiah* in three weeks and who is an undisputed master of choral work. And Wagner, a fairly difficult fellow to live with, no doubt, and valued more in death than he ever was in life.

There's Mendelssohn, who wrote *Elijah* and the "Wedding March"—and what more do you want? And Beethoven, poor but courageous, who started his professional career at five and developed an amazing individuality of style and classical beauty, plus a perfection of form. Then there's Bach, and Liszt, and Mozart—and a host of others. These things are interesting and good to know. You learn a lot of them natu-

rally, as you learn the streets of your city. Get your musical information by using it.

The adventure of getting acquainted with the good things in music is one which starts right now, and never ends. Rich or poor, we can all embark upon it—for after you have listened to a piece many times, you can start picking it out on the piano, and a whole new career opens up for you. As we go on our musical capacity will grow. It is well that this is so. But whoever you are, and whatever type of music you now like, let no one make you fearful at any time to trust your own instincts. Go on manfully—and you'll find the better things of music come to interest you as you increasingly expose yourself to them.

CHAPTER XIV

MAKE THRIFTY USE OF THE PHONOGRAPH

Millions of people are making use of the music made possible through the phonograph.

The radio is handier, of course—and cheaper—in fact, I think the radio is practically the world's greatest invention, banishing loneliness and spreading companionship as it does. Radio has only one drawback: it brings too much drivel; too many soap operas; too much hill-billy music.

The phonograph avoids these faults. When you buy a record you buy freedom from any trash that bores and annoys you. You can make up your record library to suit your own tastes and whims. And you can have *what* you want, when you want it.

You may not need a vast collection. For instance, some young friends of ours celebrated a recent raise in pay by buying a symphonic composition they had long coveted. It was Tschaikowsky's *Piano Concerto in B-flat Minor*. The next day was Sunday, and they put the new record and their portable record-player in the car and drove thirty miles to enjoy Sunday dinner with the husband's parents. Nothing would do but to delay dinner while the whole family sat breathlessly through the entire concerto. And after dinner, they went through the whole selection again. It was a memorable afternoon—this first hearing of a favorite selection that had now become truly their own.

Don't buy your record library ready-made. Select your pieces carefully, and let each one mean something to you.

And don't, I beg of you, listen habitually even to a phonograph record all alone. Music's greatest gift is an increase in

sociability; and an increase in understanding ourselves and understanding and loving our fellows. To listen alone is lonely and breeds self-consciousness. And you can so easily find fellow listeners!

This incident took place in Cleveland, but beyond doubt it is being duplicated in many other cities and towns. A neighborhood group felt poor. But they owned a few phonograph records among them. And one evening they issued a free-for-all invitation to "come and bring your own records."

To the amazement of everybody, people came by the dozens. In no time at all they had thirty-five listeners to the weekly phonograph concert. At first they used each other's houses; they sat on beds and stairways and hung from window sills. They outgrew every available hall, for before long the weekly group had jumped to two hundred.

So that those who wished might borrow favorite records and play them during the daytime, they set up a central library, and labeled each record with the owner's name. Then arose the question of insurance against possible damage. "Let's each kick in 25 cents, to take care of breakage," someone suggested. They did that. They made up a simple directory too.

This group felt after a while they deserved a better record-player. So they gave a dance, and with the proceeds bought a master instrument. That gave even greater enjoyment, because as you doubtless know the larger and better record-players bring out added depth and richness, especially in the bass.

What had started as an amusement venture grew naturally and pleasantly into a serious study group. They also linked their listening with current radio programs. Listening to the phonograph and talking over music one evening a week began to answer a real hunger in these people's lives.

You might borrow the idea for your own neighborhood, if a music-hunger exists, as it easily can. You can assign papers to be written on the background and history of any favorite composer. You can have an entire evening of Johann Sebastian Bach, or Sibelius, or whomever you choose; or you can trace the growth of the opera. All colleges that give a course in

music make steady use of phonograph records. If there is a college near you, you might enjoy calling on the professor of music and getting suggestions on how to build your own simple and workable course in music appreciation.

How far you go with this sort of thing depends on your crowd, on your opportunity and your competition, and perhaps on your proximity to other cities or other music sources. You may be the one to lead; again your job may be to follow.

Have a little faith in your friends. They may have ideas too! Keep your mind open to adventure.

A businessman in San Francisco, faced with the alternative of moving his family to a distant city or hunting a new business connection, quit his job and set up a circulating library of phonograph records. It started with only his personal collection, but the idea had such a wide appeal that it has grown. He charges a rental, and when any records get a little worn he sells them at a reduced price to students. Also, if you find a record or an album you like, he'll sell it to you. Right now it appears he may have established a new business!

A trained nurse wrote me about this. The idea of a rental library for phonograph records seemed a likely job for her to retire to. I replied: right now (1949) with every record company changing over to long-playing records and other strange devices the problem of out-guessing the future is no job for a dilettante. You'd have an incredible variety to stock, a huge inventory, great risk of obsolescence. "Why not set up a reading-room for old people and serve tea with your music; or read out loud to old folks, for a fee?" I suggested helpfully. "It seems more along your natural lines." From the trained nurse, no reply. I hope I was helpful.

Such organizations as the Carnegie Corporation have loaned or given records to schools and even, I believe, communities. It is thus possible for even residents of small towns to become familiar with great music as played by the country's leading orchestras.

You know of course that record-players are available in

many sizes and styles, and are not necessarily expensive. Any machine that changes records automatically will of course run into money. Moreover, if you get an automatic machine it is important to get albums of records that are paired in such a way as to work properly on that machine. The music store where you buy your records will explain this important detail to you. But the simple record-players are very good, and have the added advantage that they are portable and compact.

Because it's almost always the motor in a record-player which gets out of order and gives trouble, it is well to buy a record-player with a guaranteed motor.

Some friends who have a large record collection find the music is best when listened to from some distance. "Place your record-player as far away as possible from where you sit—in the next room, perhaps, connected by a wide archway," they say. "Then turn up the record-player so as to get volume. In that way you get power and true rendition. The kettle-drums and other instruments will come through with less distortion.

"Many people who buy a record-player capable of considerable depth and power make the mistake of turning it low. This doesn't give the instrument a fair chance.

"The same thing is true of a radio," they add. "Put that in the next room, and turn up the volume. It does good music better justice that way."

A long step was taken in the direction of acquainting a larger public with the best in music when some of the country's leading newspapers started to sell phonograph records, a year or so ago. The crusade sold many thousands of albums of music. Just how long this musical education campaign will continue, and how many new albums of music will be added, of course I do not know. That probably depends on the public. But the list has grown considerably since it first started.

If you are wondering whether you know and appreciate some of the good old stand-bys of the music world, you might check yourself against this list. For these are the selections

which a group of music experts felt that "everybody" would enjoy and that "everybody" ought to be glad to buy and own:

Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*
Tschaikowsky's *Fourth Symphony*
Tschaikowsky's *Nutcracker Suite*
Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*
Beethoven's *Eighth Symphony*
Mozart's *G-Minor Symphony*
Bach's *Brandenberg Concertos Nos. 2 and 3*
Wagner's "Preludes" to *Die Meistersinger* and *Parsifal*
Debussy's "Afternoon of a Faun," "Clouds," and "Festivals"
Haydn's *Symphony No. 99 in E-flat Major*
Brahms' *Second Symphony*
César Franck's *Symphony in D-Minor*

So much for symphonies. As for operas, this setup prescribes Bizet's *Carmen*, Gounod's *Faust*, Verdi's *Aïda*, *Rigoletto* and *La Traviata*, Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* and *La Bohème*, Wagner's *Tannhäuser*, and Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*.

However, don't gorge yourself on heavy music too consistently. One of my music-loving friends, for instance, can give you symphonies and operas *ad infinitum*, but occasionally he'll switch in something light and clever, such as the English folk song "Under the spreading chestnut tree," rendered by full orchestra. The change is refreshing.

It is too bad that, through laziness or an unwillingness to make ourselves conspicuous, we who love good music let ourselves be kicked around as much as we do.

For instance, you and I go into a restaurant or lunchroom. Some idiot drops a nickel in the slot, and our ears are tortured with the blaring-out of a mechanical instrument, playing some fetid swing selection. Why must music in public places sink to its lowest level?

You may feel timid about requesting the lunchroom proprietor to put symphony records in his juke-box. You may not

indeed eat in such places often enough to have the matter become critical.

But in whatever club or high-class restaurant you and your mates eat, why not encourage the management to give you really decent music with your noonday meal? It would not be a large per capita investment if your favorite club installed a record-player and gave you a complete symphony with your food; and if you are like me, you could enjoy the same symphony every day for a solid week, till you began to feel at home in it.

Don't be timid about admitting you like good music. You'll find plenty to second your idea, if you supply the initial courage needed to make the original suggestion.

Interestingly enough, Howard Johnson's new restaurant in New York City is already giving its patrons ten selections of first-class music, one after the other, during meals. The apparatus is an automatic player, operated by a push button in the checkroom. It plays softly and adds a touch of dignity as well as friendliness to an already pleasant eating-place. May the idea prove popular with other restaurateurs!

I remember an early experience with a phonograph. I had joined the Navy in 1918 and was waiting for my country's call, which threatened to delay several weeks. Having given up my job I hunted something temporary to keep me busy, and the job I found was outdoor work, to toughen me up!—working in a shipyard. For eight hours a day I helped tighten up the iron plates and ream out the holes with a pneumatic reamer, so the riveters would find clean holes and true for their rivets.

Every noon a score of us ship-builders ate lunch at a near-by boardinghouse. It had few comforts beyond good food, but it did have a phonograph. The musical assortment was brief, I seem to recall; possibly too, it was over our heads, to put the matter charitably. The favorite selection proved to be "Cohen at the Telephone."

Well, those were simple days. We went to vaudeville and to minstrel shows year after year, not to hear a new show every

week, as in radio today, but to hear the same friendly comedians deliver the same tested jokes and let us laugh at the same familiar remarks. So we ship-builders at this boardinghouse laughed every noon at Cohen, feebly insisting "I want you should send a man to mend the shutter. No. NOT two men. ONE man! To mend the shutter. No, I *didn't* say shut up!" And finally, that tired finish, "Never mind, I fix it myself."

Ingenuous, you'd call that frame of mind today. But there's something satisfying about having a few favorites—a favorite view from your window, a favorite flower or two, a favorite walk, a favorite tune or even a favorite phonograph record. I'd like to see the country come back to a simplicity that can listen to the same phonograph record day after day and not get tired of it. We have lived through an era of dizzy speed and demanding tastes, with variety and newness pre-eminent. Perhaps in the days ahead we'll be satisfied with fewer selections, and will grow fonder of those we do have because of that very fewness. You won't get tired of a few pieces if those pieces are good enough.

You may have heard that blind musicians can "hear" a phonograph record by trailing a fingernail in the groove. This doesn't seem to be much of a trick. Try it yourself! I did, and with the record at hand—an old-timer, to be sure, with the vibrations cut into the bottom of the groove—I could hear the tune clearly. With electrically-transcribed records, where the markings are on the side of the groove, I'm not so sure. It may wreck the record.

Somewhere in this book I want to suggest—repeatedly, perhaps—that you and your fellow music-lovers get acquainted with the local music-teachers. You'll find individual piano teachers, and voice teachers, and teachers of instruments; you'll find bandmasters and little neighborhood bands; you'll find such things as a Physician's Orchestra, made up of professional men who love the music of their own hands; and you'll find music teachers in your local schools.

Invite some of these teachers to address your neighborhood

group, or your luncheon club. Hunt them up—cultivate their acquaintance—ask their advice. You'll find these experts willing and grateful. Often they have to force the stuff they teach down people's throats. They'll deem it refreshing to have folks like you ASK them to give musical information, and to express their opinions as to what music you should buy and learn to love.

Get your information, whenever possible, from living persons rather than books. Or at least let some person you like and trust recommend what books to read, so in your reading you can view the text through the living eyes of someone to whom these words are important.

Make friends in the world of music. (It will help if you subscribe to some musical journal, and I leave it to you to canvass your musical friends and find the one musical magazine —there are a couple of dozen—that best appeals to you. If in doubt, send a $1 postal note to each of several music publications for a trial subscription, and then subscribe to whatever one you really like.)

If I could hand you no other gift through the printed pages of this book, I would ask for you only the courage and simplicity and directness of hunting out people and inviting their friendship. You need no other coin than honest interest in a common subject, and such admiration and hero worship as your honest heart pays to an expert in a difficult line. You will find friends waiting for you, and music will give you much in common with men and women you will admire and love.

Learn to ask questions! I sometimes think that is my only gift, and I wish it might be yours. As Peter said to the cripple, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I you." If you can share my gift of asking questions—and, please, always *direct* questions, even searching questions, asked honestly and without smirking, and asked in a spirit of honest curiosity—you can begin to make all humanity your hobby. For there is skill and artistry in even humdrum tasks, and the pride of the artist even in commonplace workmen. And he who has love in his heart finds any town a friendly spot, and the world a lovely place to live in.

CHAPTER XV

MAKE INTELLIGENT USE OF THE RADIO

There are three outstanding institutions we in these United States can be proud of. They are: the United States mails, which carry a letter safely and promptly to anyone, without fear of censorship; the public libraries; and the radio.

Oh, yes, I know we have other things to congratulate ourselves upon. The little red schoolhouse, for instance. And fresh, clean running-water in every town and city. And churches. And the world's widest assortment of foodstuffs, and probably the world's greatest abundance. And such things as dentists. And a lot of other things that we carelessly take for granted.

But I'm speaking of companionship, because you and I who read books know that life is after all a lonely matter. And in the matter of companionship, radio is the world's greatest invention. I am a real booster for it. The hours it brings the type of music that adds something to my enjoyment more than make up for its drawbacks.

Your cue no doubt is to make a list of the GOOD radio programs and watch for them. Further, your responsibility as a music-lover is to encourage the firms that put out the good programs, so they will feel it worth while to continue.

This may be more important than you think. A few weeks ago I sent a post card to a radio station, thanking them for a program called the "Telephone Hour"—a fine, dignified, delightful program for music-lovers, I said. Would you believe that my message was enough of a novelty so they mentioned it over the air?

You see, a peculiarity of us human beings is that the people

with the kindly intentions so rarely carry them out. But the crabs, who write the unpleasant, snarly letters, ALWAYS find time to write. That is why advertisers figure that, for every *pleasant* letter they receive, there were probably a thousand who *thought* of writing a similar letter—but didn't.

You can do a good deal to develop a love of good music in your neighborhood, because your local radio station is after all merely a reflection of the mental standards of its listeners. You can help local amateurs get a start over the radio. And you can help get publicity for local singing clubs, musical organizations, and the like. Your local radio station will be glad to have local outfits appear on the air—it creates good will.

I don't have much idea you can make easy money out of the radio, but as far as that goes, nobody can tell. All I do know is that radio is hard work, calling for long hours of rehearsals and long, patient hours of standing by in the studio. Even radio performers admit they have to work hard!

"Music," says my friend Arthur Pryor, Jr., after a long day of radio broadcasts and orchestra rehearsals, "is the world's first avocation. But it is the world's toughest way to make a living."

Those of course are familiar words. Hundreds of men have told me there is something wrong with their particular way of making a living. The lawyer doesn't always want his son to become a lawyer. The doctor hopes his son will discover a more orderly and a better paid road than that of a sawbones.

All people who have to sell anything for a living grow tired of that product. The sales manager for a mincemeat company showed me through his plant one day. "Can you sell mincemeat all day and then go home and eat mince pie for supper?" I asked. He replied soberly, "Well, Fred, I know mince pie is clean and pure and appetizing and wholesome, but darn it!" he added with a burst of confidence, "I've lost my appetite for it. Mincemeat to me isn't food—it's merchandise!"

Anything you see or do for twenty-four hours a day becomes a chore. You yourself might in time come to be blasé about music, as some of the young men who live around broad-

casting studios sometimes seem to be. For that very reason, make use of your fresh point of view!

While music and radio are still a novelty to you, stand off and see what you can contribute.

You might, for instance, start some new musical traditions in your city.

Why not write a community song, telling the good points of your home town? You can borrow the tune of the "Marseillaise" or "Finlandia," if you want; or write your own original tune. Don't think this is such a cockeyed idea, either. The music section of the Library of Congress has a whole drawerful of community songs, written in the days when America was a-building and when community pride was at its height. We could do a lot worse than to bring back some of that patriotism and home-town pride.

Again, why not stage a community "sing" over the radio, some time on Sunday afternoons—and persuade your local merchants to print the words of the hymns in their Saturday's ads? If you think the merchants won't be happy to co-operate on a community enterprise like this, if some local organization starts it and carries it out, you don't know them.

Here's how you can set up a new local radio program, and have it good.

Arrange with your local station to supply a quarter- or half-hour musical program, which the station can break up with spot announcements. (They get plenty of these.) Then borrow actual records from the library of local music-lovers, and with each one tell a little story, explaining why this is somebody's favorite composition. You'll find out, for instance, that some important society woman likes a certain opera selection because the orchestra was playing it when her husband proposed to her. Or that some local man of big muscles, possibly the head of a contracting firm or moving concern or other un-artistic line of business, is simply batty over a gay little dance selection, for reasons he will be glad to explain.

Right here a musical friend steps forward to suggest that

"most radio stations accept only NEW records. And any tune you want to play over the air has to be cleared through ASCAP." No doubt there are always mechanical details to straighten out; but if the idea has merit, as I think it does, the good points will outweigh the difficulties. And you'll learn some interesting things through such a program, both about music and about people who are your fellow townspeople and neighbors.

You'll be able to get little background stories about various pieces. "I heard a little Bavarian band play this in the mountain village of Oberammergau, and hunted up a record as soon as I could find one," someone will say.

Again, you'll find people who own records of the same selection, played in various years by different orchestras, and you'll be able to tell why they like THIS record best of all.

And you can borrow, from the collections of local old-timers, phonograph records made before the advent of electrical transcription. Your listeners will be amazed to see how thin the old-time records were; how rich and full the modern records are in comparison.

Perhaps you can expand your radio program and bring in local singers. Or even local violinists and such, to accompany various phonograph records (and you know, of course, you can buy records made just for that purpose, with the solo part omitted, so that you with your violin, or your cornet, or your harp, or whatever, can chime in at the right time, to the phonograph's accompaniment).

In fact, how far you carry your local program depends chiefly on your own originality and the time you wish to devote to it. Most local radio stations will thank you for a better grade of musical talent, either in-the-flesh or on phonograph records, if you do most of the leg-work to make that talent available—and if you can guarantee any permanence so that they can interest a sponsor.

Will you get paid for any such radio program? That I cannot promise. Radio salaries are not large; in fact, the handsome young men and the glamorous young women who work around radio stations receive far less than you would expect.

Salaries for network performers are indeed generous; but for local acts, the pay is not so much. Yet you have to start in your home community, before you can hope to build any national reputation. Climb whatever ladder presents itself now, and use that experience and reputation to help you find a taller ladder. The world starts right from where you now stand.

You may be able to collect, and indeed you should get paid if you set up a good local musical program. But of course you have to make good with a new idea for a while FIRST, before they start paying for it. The world is strangely unimaginative. Rarely can anyone spark to a new idea on paper. You have to carry out that idea, and let folks see actual results.

It might of course be that radio work would be more fun if you do it as a hobby, and with no thought of pay. It's fascinating to be in a radio station now and then, as a visitor, but the thrill might pall if you were an everyday employee. Keep your music on a fun basis as much as you can—your enthusiasm may be the more genuine that way.

In a book of this kind I'm more interested in helping you do something in music than I am in passing out gratuitous compliments. But it ought to be worth a paragraph or two to pay my respects to some pioneers in radio.

For certainly radio has recognized its opportunity and has accepted a stern responsibility in the musical education of the country.

Dr. Walter Damrosch did pioneer and important work. But with him as with many pioneers, the parade seems to have passed him by. He is hampered by his strong foreign accent and by his old-fashioned point of view. He has done a creditable job up to now, but I know several underpaid teachers of music who, I think, could step in and do his job better.

Deems Taylor does an excellent job of humanizing music. He may not be perfect; indeed, I have heard some people complain that Mr. Taylor has lived so long within sight of the subways that he forgets what ordinary people look like and how they think. But I have no fault to find with him. He speaks well, and even writes well.

Dr. Frank Black is tops, and the musical programs he arranges are high class without scaring away anybody who might not be able to take it straight.

The Army Band and Navy Band broadcasts are good. I am a sucker for bands.

The increasingly available symphony broadcasts are excellent. I like them even better than the Saturday afternoon grand opera broadcasts—although opera isn't bad if you can take it lying down.

The programs that feature good music are as frequent and as numerous as we probably deserve. After all, we don't have to be listening to the radio all evening long. Listen to it selectively and intelligently. In that way you'll find it the world's greatest invention—but it's still up to you to help select the programs you like, and partly up to you to make advertisers and radio stations understand that you want and appreciate the GOOD programs.

Radio would be even more popular if the folks in charge of the broadcasting stations would prevent orchestras and singers from running good tunes into the ground. Look what they did to "Jeannie with the light brown hair"—they practically ruined a beautiful song. And during Christmas week must EVERY program include "Silent night, holy night"? Why not sing these beautiful old hymns not more than once or twice a day—and sing them always reverently, not letting them be cheapened through frequent or careless rendition?

Perhaps it's a good idea to look over the evening's radio programs and mark with red pencil the ones you want to hear. If a symphony concert is scheduled from 9:30 to 10 and you want to read a book this evening, set the alarm clock for 9:30—and then read till time comes to switch on the symphony. Then LISTEN to those programs. It's as simple as that.

Doug Welch, writer of humorous short stories, finds writing goes more easily to the accompaniment of radio music. Writing is lonely work, and a writer is entitled to all the help and cheerfulness and companionship he can find while in the throes of writing.

CHAPTER XVI

HOW TO GET YOUR SON INTERESTED IN MUSIC

When a young man joins the Army or Navy, or registers for the draft, he is asked, "Do you play any musical instruments?"

So important is music felt to be that the authorities give it special encouragement. Music builds and maintains morale. It makes more cheerful campmates; makes better fighting men.

Plenty of young men now entering the Army are already wishing they had stuck to their practicing more faithfully when someone else was paying for their lessons. Plenty of fathers too have seen how useful music can be in a man's life.

Yet parents still have difficulty keeping their sons at their piano practice.

Maybe the sons don't think that lessons and practice are necessary. Perhaps your son thinks he knows plenty of big-name orchestra leaders who are illiterate, unmusical—and wealthy; but the fact is, most or all jazz band leaders studied legitimate music and developed an idea.

Unfortunately, he'll find many of his mates who agree with him. Why study long hours and grow into a dull sort of musician? Why study at all?

Why study the theory of music, indeed? I passed this question on to one of the instructors in the Navy School of Music in the Navy Yard at Washington, D. C.

"Is it necessary to go to school and read these books of yours to play in a band?" I asked. "Can't a man just start in and play?"

"Yes, you can play without learning the technique," the

Navy man answered. "But it would be like a doctor trying to understand medicine without studying anatomy.

"I can tell the difference. If a man understands technique, when he's playing in an orchestra or a band he knows where the bass comes in, and where the other parts fit in. Hence he can play his part with CONVICTION. That makes a better musician out of him."

Another Navy music instructor broke in: "When a composer writes a piece he has something in mind. He may be trying to paint a picture, or tell a story, or get over to you the idea of happiness, or of deep thought, or patriotism, or meditation, or whatever. It is not much fun to just sit there and put notes down on paper!

"So when another artist plays that piece, it helps if he can put himself in the frame of mind to ask 'What picture is the composer describing?' and to try to play that picture."

The man who understands music can create something when he plays, because he knows what the composer had in mind and because he has been trained to feel, and feel deeply.

"It is unfortunate," the Navy band teachers went on, "that music, which is the most aesthetic of the arts, calls for so much physical endurance in carrying it out. You can't step up and play ANY instrument immediately or carelessly. You've got to practice. If you want to get any kind of range on a cornet, you need worlds of patience and hours of tooting. You may spend two or three days on some easy slur with only two degrees of the scale, up and down!"

A young cornetist of the Navy band spoke up in corroboration. "I used to get a headache when I played the high notes," he said. "I found out it was because I hadn't worked up to them. It's like trying to lift a two hundred-pound weight without warming up to it."

I am glad to give these first-hand reports from the United States Navy Band, as evidence that even in a thoroughly man's organization like that a man still needs some practice. And he needs to know something about the theory of music.

So these Navy bandsmen spend two or three years studying

music as if it were a subject like mathematics, and learning a little piano, and mastering both a band instrument and a string instrument. They copy out most of their own music, which is good practice and economical. And they sing—oh yes, they sing. They don't sing any special words, because most band music doesn't have any words. Just do-re-mi or la-la-la. But they find they can play a piece more feelingly if they sing it first.

By virtue of this thorough training the various bands on United States Navy ships can play for a dance on board or ashore and can play music that cheers and music that inspires. They can play dozens and hundreds of favorite selections, and you don't get tired of listening. And lest you think a band is just excess baggage when an emergency arises, you should know that Navy bandsmen already assigned to ships have won for themselves battle positions calling for skill and timing and headwork, through sheer merit. For the training they learn in following orders and using their heads in playing with a band makes them just a shade smarter than the average in a lot of difficult assignments. Playing a musical instrument correctly teaches a man self-discipline.

If any young son of yours suggests that practicing his music lesson is sissy work, I'd like to take him to watch a rehearsal of the United States Navy Band. He'd see that music is a thoroughly masculine, thoroughly normal, thoroughly enjoyable affair. Work? Yes, of course; but work can be enjoyable when you put your heart in it, and when you know the results are going to be worth while.

There's something stimulating about being a member of a band or orchestra. It's far less self-conscious than playing and practicing alone. And in a band the leader takes our own puny little skill and blends it in with the sounds of half a hundred other instruments, to make a new something far bigger than any of us. That's thrilling. It's too bad that boys who dread practicing can't step right into a real orchestra, which is spec-

tacular and businesslike and exciting. Practicing all alone at home seems so futile, so roundabout, so almost silly.

But of course to join the Navy band you have to be grown-up; you have to enlist for six years; and you have to work after you get there.

We have a good many high-school orchestras and bands, and occasionally you run across a good community orchestra. Generally such an activity has to center around some one man as organizer and leader. I understand there are three hundred recognized symphony orchestras now in this country. The total number of local orchestras and bands must run into the thousands.

I wish for your son an early acquaintance with some really high-grade musician, who can help unlock the music in his heart and make him a bigger man. But just as you need to be able to spell a little bit to find a word in the dictionary, so you need to know a little something about music before you can even talk music with an expert. Getting those early steps in music—making friends with the piano and looking on it as a privilege rather than a punishment, is the immediate assignment. Let's tackle that together now.

I was halfway through high school before anyone really attracted me to music. Oddly enough, it wasn't any music teacher then, though I had suffered under a couple of earnest but aimless women piano teachers and done the routine singing once a week which was a successful feature of the Oak Park schools.

It was a boy who prompted me to start playing the piano. Who he was, I haven't the slightest idea. He was playing for a crowd of youngsters at the local YMCA, and I, timid and lonely, was on the outer edge of the circle. The music sounded good. I had never realized how firmly and yet how naturally a man's fingers could caress the keys, bringing out a strong chord here, delaying a trifle for an effect at the end. It was wonderful.

I went home and borrowed some of my sister's sheet music. Painstakingly I mastered some of the old-timers then current. It took practice to figure out the chords! But I learned to play.

I practiced with the hymnbook, because in our home we weren't allowed to play popular music on Sundays.

One summer my father offered me five dollars if I would learn Handel's "Largo." The practicing required all summer, but I learned the piece. I have never forgotten it. It is a good habit, incidentally, to dig something out by yourself. After all, no one can TEACH you anything. In the final analysis you've got to learn it for yourself and by yourself.

Somehow I acquired the ability to hear a piece in a show and go home and play it. Playing by ear is an accomplishment you enjoy almost even more than playing by note. But I wish now my finger work were not so ragged. I could have used some more running scales, and the other tedious stuff that boys always resent. My piano playing is tense, jerky and muscle-bound. I could play practically all the tunes there were when I was in college, and I still know a bit of Gilbert and Sullivan and Victor Herbert and the others; and the hymn book never leaves you, once you make friends with it. Lately I've added some simplifications of Beethoven and César Franck and a few of the others.

Music is wonderful good company through life. I can walk down the street to the remembered strains of Sousa's marches. I can cheer the wait in a dentist's office by running the "Chorus of the Peers" from *Iolanthe* or the "Hallelujah Chorus" from *The Messiah* through my head. As for playing, I have helped break the ice in after-dinner parties and Boy Scout meetings and even once or twice at a rally or mass meeting. The fellow who can play need never be self-conscious or timid. He's paying his own way. He contributes something to the occasion.

One of the brightest and most promising young fellows I know at the moment is a wizard at the piano. He's studying chemical engineering for his life work. And why? "I figured out that chemical engineering won't injure my hands, and that it will make me a living and still let me go on with my piano," he says. There's a lad who wants a little jelly for his soul along with the daily bread-and-butter.

But how to get YOUR boy started loving music, just a little

bit? Suppose we let a high-school bandmaster suggest an answer.

"I claim that good music is very contagious," says this bandmaster. "All you have to do is to have good music available, and youngsters grow to like it.

"In music you start with rhythm. If your heart doesn't beat in rhythm, the undertaker will get you.

"We're all susceptible to vocal inflections, which give us tone.

"The trouble is, in times past, the experts have tried to jam good music down people's throats. Folks don't go for that thou-shalt-not.

"The more you expose yourself to good music, the more you like it."

He goes on to say that the boys and girls who join his band in high school, or even take part in the little musical affairs in the grades, are less of a disciplinary problem than are most of the others. Evidently every youngster has a desire to excel, and if you can satisfy that desire normally and wholesomely, all is well. If not, the boy may burst out into some form of orneriness.

This bandmaster doesn't attempt to lead the children into the higher ranges of music appreciation. Light operas and some of the simpler classics, plus some dependable band tunes, are enough for him. But he does plant the seeds for a respect and an understanding of fine music.

"Don't imitate the current popular band leaders," he says. "Any imitator is an ape, and an ape is a monkey. Don't be a monkey. Later on, perhaps, you can develop your own style of playing, but it won't be whatever is successful today, but what is new and interesting twenty years from now."

When he feels the children need a lesson, as for instance when they tease for permission to play some swing favorite, he has his own cure. He lets them play it, not once but ten or twenty times, until they sicken of it. "Let's play some REAL music!" some youngster will exclaim. And the rest of the band will echo the protest. After such a lesson the youngsters realize that much modern music is shallow and trashy and tedious,

while some of the older pieces have something in them that keeps you from ever becoming bored and sated.

It might just be there's a good bandmaster doing an unappreciated job in your own high school and grade schools. Bring him out into the open! Have him talk to your luncheon club. Find out when the high-school band will give its next concert, and be there with your gang. If the band needs uniforms, or if the present uniforms need cleaning and pressing, your enthusiasm and a little cash will help. And if the music department of your local schools isn't as good as it ought to be, and can be, a little attention from you fathers can do a lot of good.

For after all, schools are seldom much better than the local clientele demands and is willing to pay for.

A big boost was given to music appreciation when a church organist named Ralph E. Clewell took charge of the department of music at Western Reserve Academy at Hudson, Ohio. The academy had only one piano at the time, and that was in the basement. It was a battered old affair—you had to brace your knee under the front to keep it from falling forward while you played.

Clewell went to work. He asked for larger facilities. He began selecting some good prospects for voice and instrument. He enlisted the co-operation of the parents. That much was obvious.

He went to work also at the top. Music received less than reasonable attention, he found, because it carried no credits toward college entrance. It seemed thus to be a useless adornment, not a practical accomplishment. Clewell went to bat. He found that the National Association of Schools of Music accredited conservatories of music and the music departments of colleges and universities, but had made no provision for accrediting the preparatory levels. But why? asked Clewell. He organized a campaign and brought in the support of other preparatory schools.

So now schools and colleges throughout the country are accepting credits under the NASM plan, and the boy or girl

who studies music in school receives credit for it, just as much as for studying a modern language or any other academic subject.

And so, if your son turns up his nose at music, try exposing him to good music in the home—work for a better music department in your local schools—and, if possible, send him to some school or college that has a really good department of music, preferably headed by a man. It may well be that the schooling program of the future will be built more largely around music. For when you encourage a boy to lift up his voice in song, or to take a beloved instrument in his arms, he becomes thereby a little less than the angels. It sometimes seems to me that, in the thrifty and common-sense days of the future, we'll bring experts of the NYA, the Boy Scouts, the YMCA, the 4-H clubs, and various school and community recreation and educational programs together, and work out one uniform and harmonious and efficient program for bringing up the nation's boys and girls.

And in any such program of development and recreation and wholesome self-expression, I think you'll find that music will have an increasingly important part.

CHAPTER XVII

MUSIC AS THE GREAT COMMON DENOMINATOR

All the arts and sciences are growing more humane. I can remember when going to the dentist meant sitting in the chair for three hours with a rubber-dam in my mouth, while the dentist drilled (with a slow foot-operated drill) and hammered in gold. Today, dental appointments are mercifully short—twenty to thirty minutes.

Having your picture taken used to mean getting your head clamped into an iron bracket and holding an awkward, silly pose while the photographer ordered you to watch the birdie. Why more of us didn't slaughter photographers in our youth is still a mystery.

Funerals once were something to grow hysterical at and remember ever after. Now a funeral is as chaste and cheerful as a transition from one room to another, which is as it should be.

Musical affairs in my youth were frequently something born out of pain and listened to out of suffering. You rarely went unless you had to, and you didn't expect to *enjoy* the stuff. Music was earnest, which often meant gloomy and depressing. You struggled to appreciate it.

Somewhere along the line we began to learn to *like* music. Perhaps it was the radio. Perhaps it was travel. Folks went to Europe and sat in Bavarian beer gardens and heard really good orchestras play excellent music, and they soaked in the music along with their beer. Such innovations as the "Pops" in Boston, the huge outdoor Stadium in New York City, and the more recent summer popular concerts in the Public Hall at

Cleveland familiarized people with the idea that music can be absorbed painlessly. You can relax now while taking it. You can enjoy music today without looking and feeling and acting self-conscious.

In this country music has become one of our great national industries. Thousands of youngsters are busily tooting, hoping some day to see their names on phonograph discs as leaders of some noted orchestra. Thousands of businessmen who, a few short years ago, would have turned and run if anyone had mentioned serious music to them, have learned through radio to listen to symphony and opera and actually like it.

It is well that we have learned to make frequent use of great music. Things were made to use and enjoy, not to put in museums. I am satisfied that Shakespeare, for instance, wasn't writing deathless literature but was writing entertainment. I like to respect the great masters in all the arts; respect them, but not be afraid of them. I am glad, on the whole, that today's youngsters feel at home in the presence of Bach and Brahms and the others.

But I hope we *never* make some things common and cheap. It is well to stand during the singing of the "Hallelujah Chorus." Life has too few moments of elevation.

I remember the day my wife and I visited the cathedral at Seville, Spain. It had been a cold, drizzling morning and we expected little from the Spaniards. The outside of this cathedral was not imposing. We lifted the heavy tarpaulin—designed to keep out both moisture and such things as pigeons—and stepped inside. And immediately our eyes were carried upward by the lofty arches. We were hushed and awed. It was a moment of reverence we shall not soon forget.

With all our new familiarity with music, I hope we can save it from ever becoming tawdry and cheap. I am for hanging young squirts who maltreat familiar classics with their dance bands.

Not that I think music should not be used hard, in the right places. I'm all for the old-fashioned cook who used "Nearer, my God to thee" for boiling eggs—three verses for soft-

boiled, four verses for hard. But I'll bet she sang the hymn respectfully!

Some of our modern music is so smarty that it drives music-lovers from the hall. To me distorted music is not amusing, any more than perversion in sex or illiteracy or any other form of degeneracy is amusing.

"But you don't get the idea!" argues a young musical friend. "That awful noise you hear on a thirty-five-cent disc may not strike you as anything you like, but it's an interesting case of musical history in the making. Dance music has gone to noise just because someone wanted to be DIFFERENT. A lot of today's better orchestra leaders are trained musicians and composers, and in today's music, *arrangements* have taken the place of *tunes*.

"These various dance bands are trying to do some things that you and I don't think should be there. But we may be wrong. When I see a crowd of young high-school boys and girls pacing out the rhythm and talking about Artie Shaw's arrangement and so on, I wonder if you and I oughtn't to be getting something more out of this modern music than maybe we are getting!"

Well, I'm willing to be convinced. But I prefer a tune to plain noise.

Some of today's music of course is excellent. George Gershwin—Jerome Kern—Irving Berlin, and a few others—you don't need to look down your nose at any of them. Deems Taylor's "Through the Looking-Glass" is excellent. The list of modern American composers is longer than you think. For instance, take Vincent Youmans' "Tea for Two," or the early pieces of Rodgers and Hart or some of the later ones by Rodgers and Hammerstein, with even a little of the better Cole Porter. Not forgetting the indefatigable Jerome Kern.

Burton Garlinghouse, who lives in the world of music, assures me that popular music has improved tremendously. "The orchestrations are more interesting, and harmonically more varied," he says. "The music is often melodically original and even the words have humor and wit, if, occasionally, they seem rather sultry.

"Compare today's popular music with that of the '90's and the 1900's," he goes on. "It is infinitely better. Popular music has made far greater strides than has 'legitimate' music in the same period.

"The reason we are critical of today's popular music is that we get it dinned into our ears all day on the radio."

Maybe so. But the reason I get fed up with some of this popular music is that the bands insist on twisting it into something different from the tune you expect. Why can't they follow the notes? I like a tune better when it is recognizable; not when some crazy orchestra messes it around. I guess I don't like "swing" music.

In fact, when I hear a bunch of professional youngsters tearing themselves to pieces—and the music too—I am distressed to see so much energy applied in the wrong directions. It brings to mind the anecdote about Dr. Johnson. He heard a young woman sing, you recall, and the singing was distressing. "That's a very difficult piece she sings," suggested a friend helpfully. "Difficult?" snorted Dr. Johnson, "I wish to God it were impossible!"

Maybe you and I can live to see the youngsters of today dance to a less noisy music than is offered at the moment. A pity it is that a lot of our music, by which this country is interpreted to the rest of the world, is flippant, is violent and disrespectful to anyone with roots in the past, and often is disgustingly cheap. And it isn't even cheerful.

Come to think of it, isn't most hillbilly music doleful?

You might think people would prefer cheerful music, but that doesn't always seem to be the case. They steep themselves in sadness. Quite a few programs on the radio open with a nostalgic selection on the parlor organ, and by conspiracy these broadcasters have managed to make the organ the world's most doleful instrument. If we judge people's tastes by what many of them are willing to listen to, then far too many of them regard sadness as being akin to thoughtfulness, and accept gloom as being equivalent to depth.

Well, you and I may be able to do something about just

that. Let's make it our personal mission to acquaint people with good music.

The appreciation of good music has widened tremendously within the past ten years. Millions of people have come to understand and love bits of the world's great music. As a nation, however, we still put our worst foot foremost. The music handed out to us in greatest quantities on the radio and through juke-boxes is noisy and despicable. Those of us who can take good music straight haven't been able—perhaps we haven't tried!—to make ourselves heard.

We may well need to organize our lives around something substantial and cheerful. War clouds are overhead. Some privileges we have taken for granted may begin to be precious to us now. Religion—cleanliness—education—music—all these things suffer from a bombing attack. Perhaps we have been too casual in accepting our blessings. Perhaps we need a jolt to remind us how truly fortunate we are.

My definition of a hobby is "what you would be doing if you didn't have to work for a living." Suppose someone left you a million dollars; then you could spend all your time and a lot of money on, say, a stamp collection in which you could be as thorough and as painstaking as your heart desired. Well, say I, don't wait for the million dollars, but start the stamp collection today. A hobby therefore represents a philosophy of life. It can be the thing that makes life worth living.

I emphasize music-as-a-hobby as a means of making friends, helping others maintain their morale in these nerve-wracking times, and helping all of us maintain individual sanity. Also, because we as a country must learn to live together, and to establish a basis on which we can work together and live at peace, music as the great common denominator is indispensable.

Indeed, in these uncertain times we live in, music can help tremendously to keep us calm and cool, to build national morale, and to provide a common basis on which all Americans can meet.

And the wonderful thing about music is that it is available

to every one of us. We can listen and we can enjoy good music. And every one of us can learn to love good music and to play, poorly perhaps at first, but increasingly well as we grow to love music and develop our own God-given ability to express the best that's in us through the sound of music.

Rich or poor, victorious or conquered, a capitalistic nation or socialistic or nationalistic or whatever the future may hold for us, we need music. And if we want music badly enough, we'll find ways of procuring and supplying our love of music. It will be better music, too, no doubt, as our own earnestness burns away much of the dross of our present too carefree life and makes us value what is true and beautiful.

In the uncertain days ahead let's live our lives to music. When hardship comes, let's whistle to keep up our courage. And when the inevitable arrives, let's take it bravely, faces forward, and with a song in our hearts.

CHAPTER XVIII

SUBSCRIBE TO SOME JOURNAL OF YOUR HOBBY

I always advise a hobbyist to subscribe for at least one trade paper in his chosen field. The reason is obvious. Many of us live in smaller cities, away from the wide opportunities of the metropolises. We can never hope to meet many of the big shots in our field. We can borrow other people's ideas, however, and share the acquaintance of dozens and hundreds of able writers in our field, by subscribing to a music publication.

In other words, reading some music magazine every month will widen your horizon, extend your acquaintance, help you maintain your enthusiasm, and also improve your methods. Thus it increases the results of your efforts and saves you considerable time.

The cost is not large. Music teachers are seldom highly paid, and the economy of the profession is reflected in the subscription rates of the magazines.

In addition, you can learn much about current trends in music by reading the advertisements. If you are just now selecting your own musical equipment, perhaps some ad in a music journal will help you invest your money most wisely.

Usually too you can receive some highly useful information from the various editors, when you have specific problems to meet. Do not be afraid to write and ask questions of an editor! If your questions cover something his magazine has already discussed, your inquiry gives him an opportunity to sell you some back copies. If your letter suggests something new that his readers may be interested in you are helping him in the always difficult job of keeping his ear to the ground and making his magazine timely.

XIX

ADVENTURES WITH MUSIC

The squadron leader with the wave in his hair sat down at the aged made-in-Germany piano. His strong fingers pounded out the haunting and moody chords of Chopin's funeral march.

You know the place where Chopin switches from gloomy minor to cheerful major? Well, there was a second battered piano in this Danish ballroom by the sea, and by the time my friend in the little blue uniform reached there I was dueting him. We finished in a dead heat.

Then I swung into the Moonlight Sonata. Beethoven would have been startled and pleased. Who gave you the idea that good music wasn't meant to be fun?

Someone threw us out presently by the simple expedient of starting a record-player—did I say this was a dance for Royal Air Force officers stationed in Denmark in 1945? My squadron leader pal hooked elbows with me and piloted the two of us to a small bar. It seems sacrilege in Denmark to drink anything but fresh milk, but the Danes, who don't want to kill anything by monotony, also make excellent beer. There was even a little Scotch, imported for the use of the Forces and sold at the usual less-duty price: a small slug for 50 Danish öre—about sixpence, a dime.

In five minutes that squadron leader had told me his life's secrets. He told of his happy little wife; told how a boyhood indiscretion had given him venereal disease and left him sterile but how he and his wife were adopting a child or two, come peace and a steady job. Why do people confide so much in

absolute strangers? Perhaps that's it: you tell a stranger things you'd never dare discuss with someone you see every day.

Other R.A.F. officers joined us. One, a flight-leftenant (odd how the British mis-pronounce the French word lieutenant) had served as leading navigator for the mission which successfully bombed Shell House, which was headquarters for the Gestapo in Copenhagen. He told how the aircraft (R.A.F. never says airplane or ship; always aircraft or crate) flew low to avoid being picked up by enemy radar, so low in fact that salt spray splashed their wind-screens. And how the planes skimmed the roof of the brothel for the mistresses of prison guards and dropped their bombs, at zero altitude, directly at the doorway of this building which was used as a torture chamber. And then back to England until came the day when British forces could land in Denmark and with the help of some Americans schooled in such matters help locate monies and properties stolen by the Nazis and help the Danes get their little country back to normal.

We talked cheerfully: music, favored spots in the United Kingdom, food, peacetime hopes, and again music. Presently we sang. There is a new international language made up of the immortal melodies of Stephen Collins Foster and Irving Berlin and George M. Cohan and Jerome Kern. And a lot of others. American diplomats are frequently stodgy and hard to understand, but American music is good-natured and speaks all languages. Perhaps our popular music sometimes underrates us, because it implies we are a race of carefree people, but it also indicates we know how to laugh. In a world as full as ours of imaginary headaches, being able to laugh is an important national asset.

That was only one time out of dozens, even hundreds, where piano-playing has opened a gay adventure for me.

Take the crossing home from England on the *Queen Mary* in late 1945 when World War II was definitely over. Here was a ship with 11,000 people aboard, and except for the half dozen enlisted men I had met casually on the boat train from London, I didn't know a soul. I don't enjoy being without friends.

The officers' lounge was crowded and the one brave piano got a continuous workout. About 10 on the first night out from Southampton I took my turn at the piano. The air force major whose voice was loudest on the medley of college tunes hailed me. "You were at our base and because our acting public relations officer was a sergeant and so wasn't given the privileges of the officer's club you took your meals with him at the GI mess," he said cordially. "We promoted the sergeant later, partly on your recommendation, and I always remember you for that."

It was a lovely crossing.

Other piano-playing memories crowd my notes. Take the summer of 1938, when my wife and I were the only Americans on a three-day trip by coastwise steamer from Oslo to Kristiansand and Fevik. The little ship tied up to few ports. At many a hidden dock we nosed in briefly while busy hands tossed ashore a bale of rope or a sack of mail and perhaps picked up a keg of salt fish. At one stop a high school basketball team plus local fans came aboard for the day. They heard me at the piano and crowded into the tiny room. "Play 'Old Black Joe.' Play 'Massa's in the Cold, Cold Ground,' " they requested, in perfect English. They knew all the old favorites and sang them lustily. (I know no Norwegian.)

In 1948, I visited Children's Village at Dobbs Ferry, New York. A young guide was showing me around the various buildings and everybody was being polite and dutifully saying the dullest things. On an impulse I struck a few chords on a battered piano. Instantly the tension loosened. A score of homesick boys crowded around the keyboard, asking me to play this, play that. It was the only time for weeks, no doubt, when anybody had voluntarily created music in that very proper building. I was happy to be able to furnish some bedtime cheer to these music-hungry lads.

Again, at the Southern Michigan State Prison in Jackson, I met up with a piano and an eager audience. A young fellow with only seven more months of his sentence—I think he had been sent away for car-stealing, which considering how careless people are about leaving their keys in the ignition when

they park is certainly not a surprising offense—had hunger in his eyes when I played the piano.

"Sit down here, Joe, and let me show you how a piano works," I suggested.

He sat down. I stood alongside him and punched middle C.

"Start here," I said. "It's the white key to the left of the two black keys, nearest the piano-lock.

"Run up the scale," I continued. "See how you hit seven white notes, and then the thing starts all over again, an octave higher. Look, you can play a tune way up in the treble or deep down in the bass. It's all the same scale, repeated several times over."

Gingerly and with awe in his eyes he picked out the scale. I had him run some scales first with his right hand, then with his left, even attempting to show him how to tuck his thumb under at the right place so he wouldn't run out of fingers.

"What's your favorite tune?" I asked presently.

" 'By the Light of the Silvery Moon,' " he replied.

"I'll play it for you, with one finger on each hand," I told him. He got up and I sat down. Then, taking the key of C, I played the treble with one finger, presently adding a see-saw bass, again with only one left-hand finger striking the keys at one time. Try it some time! You can still recognize the tune.

"Now let's see you try it," I urged.

Well, he was all thumbs, as was to be expected. I asked Leo, a friendly young lifer who clerks in the prison music department, to keep after him and show him the elements of piano-playing again, after I had left. I'm still sorry I couldn't have stayed in Jackson another week. By that time I probably could have had young Joe playing the piano; laboriously, to be sure, but playing.

My singing voice is unremarkable, but at least it's willing. During my wartime stay in Egypt I flew in a C-46 one week-end from Cairo to Luxor, and back. It was pleasant to revisit the Tombs of the Kings under such comfortable conditions. Flying back to Cairo I put on a throat microphone and sang a song, as did several GI's in our party. With head-phones on

my ears I could hear my own voice and nothing else. It sounded wonderful. Especially the song "Deep Purple." I thought, "This is an experience which King Tut never had. And you, Anthony and Cleopatra, down there in your love-boat on the Nile, you never really lived."

If you're timid I wish you could have the experience of singing to yourself under the magic of electrical magnification. It's amazing.

Another musical memory: A decade or more ago I attended the formal reception at F. A. Seiberling's home in Akron where a young radio singer we had just met stepped forward and started serenading a young lady on the ballroom balcony overhead. Necks craned. Who *is* that attractive girl? everyone asked. Recognition dawned along with the familiarity of the piece, which was the love song from Romeo and Juliet. And so it was that James Melton announced his engagement to Marjorie McClure. Neat, we thought it.

A few years back I visited the G. C. Conn factory in Elkhart, Indiana, birthplace of many fine band instruments. They showed me an invention called a musical stroboscope. Play or sing any note and the dials showed what note you hit and how cleanly you hit it, also how many and what harmonics accompanied that note to give it richness and warmth. A beautiful device it is for tuning a horn, because it avoids guesswork.

In Washington, D. C., I recently had an opportunity to play a harp. I was surprised to find it has only white notes, if you get what I mean. You make sharps by pressing down the proper foot pedal, and that works for the entire keyboard. I decided again a harp is maximum bulk and minimum results. A mouth-organ, is just the reverse—little bulk, lots of music. Furthermore, I don't like the restless way a harp hunts around instead of ending finally on a note. All those cascades of unnecessary sounds make me nervous.

Further prejudices: I don't like chimes on an organ; the novachord; electric organs; organ music on the radio; most soprano singers. Most lasting prejudice: the tuneless stuff by a guy named Czerny they make youngsters practice piano on.

Why break a kid's heart by sentencing him to pieces with no tune? What's wrong with Percy Grainger, or even Victor Herbert? It seems to me music is meant to be fun.

I used to love the theatre in the days when you could buy a ticket without planning weeks ahead. Movies never seem important to me, but shows are different. Recently I attended a new 1949 vaudeville show at the Palace Theater in New York. It was good fun being across the footlights again from human beings. And do you know what I enjoyed best? The theatre orchestra. That set the pace for each act. The music gave the performance life and tone. It made me feel this show was being staged expressly for me; not just something fished out of a can from far-off Hollywood.

Now a frank word about money. Hobbies have a way of being expensive in both money and time. You can build your hobby, even music, to a point where your family complain of neglect. You can acquire equipment so handsome you hesitate to use it.

Aim for a balance. Don't go broke patronizing the high grade music stores. Don't lose your self-respect either, buying your musical instrument in some pawn-shop.

Perhaps you can try out several different instruments on a trial basis. Find out whether you are likely to succeed with a wind instrument, or a stringed instrument, or what. Inquire also what the local demand is: the visible opportunity.

Make sure you know your mind before you buy any instrument. Then buy as good an instrument as you can afford, leaving reserve cash for your lessons, your sheet music, your travel. Get yourself before the public somehow, if only to play or sing for nearby luncheon clubs. This suggestion checks with what I wrote in "Photography as a Hobby," now newly republished at 35 cents by Permabooks, which is: get a camera you can handle, not one that embarrasses you and keeps you broke. Have it a camera that challenges your best and that you take pride in, but first of all make sure you get results, which means you know how to use the thing. Your public will not inquire or care what your equipment costs;

it judges you by the clearness of your pictures, if you are a photographer, by the novelty or sweetness or richness of your tones, if you are a musician.

If you can't afford to buy much music, at least buy yourself a good hymn book. It has everything: melody that is durable and foolproof, harmony that you can handle with two fingers on each hand. Never such chords as you find in the old familiar hymns. I learned to love them early in life, and like Fred Waring, I never get tired of hearing them or playing and singing them.

Our house was a preacher's house, and while living was never gloomy or circumscribed we did observe the Sabbath. There was no ragtime playing on Sunday. Imagine then with what glee my sister and I discovered that the Moody and Sankey hymn book had waltzes and two-steps! We found we could play lively tunes and still observe the Sabbath. Perhaps we violated the spirit of the law a little but at least we kept the letter of the law.

Music for me has been a companion for lonely hours, an inexpensive and portable accomplishment, a way to make friends. You find yourself in a gathering of people who are aloof and cold, and somehow somebody, maybe yourself, settles down presently at the piano and turns that crowd of strangers into a congenial circle of friends. It is a wonderful privilege to be able to travel the earth with friendliness in your heart and the means of creating passable music in your fingers. I covet that privilege for you who read this book.

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